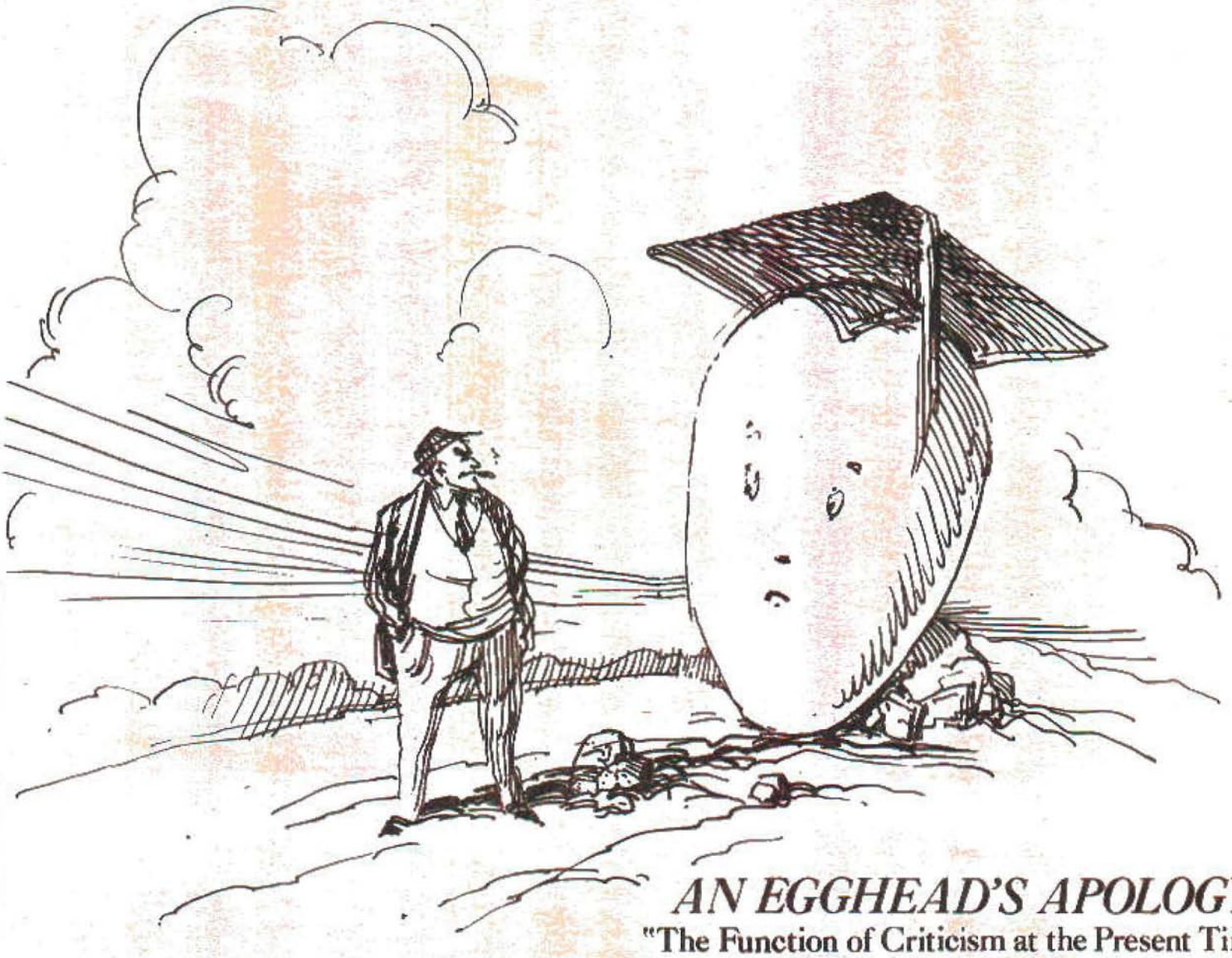
THE ALTERNATIVE



AN EGGHEAD'S APOLOGY

"The Function of Criticism at the Present Time"

Roger Rosenblatt

Vol. 5 No. 5 25¢ February, 1972

TERRY KRIEGER on Justice in the Middle East

WILLIAM KRISTOL on Super Sheikdoms (the emerging threat to world peace)

Reviews of Berman, Hornblower, Lysenko, Skinner

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THE ALTERNATIVE

to bare the witness and the truth.

Published remarkably without regard to race, color, creed, or (most redundantly of all) national origin — the question of sex is still in committee.

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The Continuing Crisis

● Over in the Indian subcontinent, the paupers were snarling and clawing over the delectable bones of Bangladesh. After fourteen days of fighting, clowning and furious moralizing, the vivacious Ms. Indira Gandhi proclaimed the triumph of virtue and the fabled Indian military. Few followers of world affairs were surprised when Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto assumed the presidency of a bifurcated Pakistan, nor were they ruffled when America's peace wowsers blasted Mr. Nixon for not "doing something" in India and for doing too much in Vietnam where the bombing increased significantly. Little was said about the American army's continuing troop withdrawals.

● Mr. Nixon's December emgagements included the amiable and liberated Mr. Trudeau of Canada on the sixth. On the thirteenth and fourteenth it was an Azore rendezvous with France's M. Pompidou, then on to Bermuda for a two-day idyl with Mr. Heath, and finally on the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth, Mrs. Nixon served pretzels and beer for Germany's Herr Brandt at Key Biscayne.

● The Senate confirmed Mr. Lewis Powell and Mr. William Rehnquist to the Supreme Court, and Congress passed a bill requiring more revealing reports on political campaign contributions. *Time* named Mr. Nixon its "Man of the Year" in spite of the American Hotel and Motel Association's acknowledgment of Mr. Joe Zito, a bellman at the Sheraton-Chicago, as its "Man of the Year."

● Former Senator Eugene McCarthy on 17 December disclosed his intention to become President, and on 18 December the dollar lost 12 per cent of its value. An Austrian diplomat was crowned secretary-general of New York's United Nations, and New Hampshire voters will have the special treat this spring of observing Senator Vance Hartke perform for the presidency in their primary.

● Conservationists were out in force, but their success was limited. On 24 December Mr. Michael James Brody, philanthropist, rock virtuoso and oleomargarine heir, was arrested for threatening America's presidential population. Miss Winnie Ruth Judd, famed "Tiger Woman" of the thirties, was released from the Arizona State Prison. Millionaire truck driver Mr. James Hoffa also was granted liberty. Clint Crane will continue to drive his Baltimore garbage truck, having received a pardon from North Carolina's

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Editorial I

Superstitions and the Stuff of History

THE RECENTLY published monograph of a relatively unknown Hoosier historian, Mr. Harry Emerick, has moved me to productive meditations on the nature of America's present distemper, for he writes about American superstitions. Not surprisingly, Mr. Emerick, a forester by vocation and a grammar school dropout, has managed to preserve an admirable lucidity and fundamental intelligence which distinguishes him from more celebrated historians, such as Dr. William Appleman Williams and Professor Gabriel Kolko, who do not seem to realize that they too write about superstitions. Mr. Emerick's book, *Recipes, Remedies, and Reflections — 1770-1807* (advertised elsewhere in this issue), chronicles some of the gorgeous and idiotic superstitions which our oafish antecedents held as Gospel. I cannot see how they differ essentially from the superstitions of our own day, save that they might have been less mischievous to the common wealth.

Some of this marvelous guidance could only counsel a man on sound personal hygiene or on invincible strategies in *amour*, but other more cosmic injunctions, I am sure, benefited national polity, and so formed our incomparable heritage. For instance the early superstition that "a live snake put in a barrel of cider will keep it from spoilin', and keep it sweet" might strike modern bacteriologists as improbable, and it probably never influenced President Jackson's thoughts on, say, the Bank of the United States, but who believes that Mr. Jackson ever turned down the sheets without first enjoining Major Lewis to "check the snakes"? By such ruminations I do not mean to smudge Mr. Jackson's venerable image. We all know that public figures — regardless of their sagacity — are only rarely secure from that ambience of dubiety and buncombe which seeps throughout society in general, and the superstitions of yesteryear are but amusing prefaces to the nonsensical notions of today. A certain set of *wunder* guidelines once instructed a President on preserving his apples; a later equally silly set inspires a President's dealings with Oriental thugs.

Superstition has molded the contours of all history. The birth of a new era merely indicates the triumph of less familiar, more beguiling superstitions. Nowadays our political messiahs are rejected as hypocrites and scoundrels, unworthy of high office, if they do not wink at the truth and proclaim their deep solicitude for Chicanos, Indians, students, homosexuals, tomboys or whatever the next object of American iconography is to be. How does this essentially differ from the moonshine of the last century when many wise men of affairs solemnly believed that blisters on the tongue were caused "by tellin' lies"? Of course this mysterious knowledge never elevated their *ruses de la politique*, but it certainly created boom times for peddlers of tongue cosmetics, and many a rising young Van Buren saw his swindle sink into the deep because of what was really little more than the primitive state of oral hygiene.

Though Mr. Emerick never mentions it, I imagine the secret service maintained elaborate files concerning the tongues of every suspicious politician and editor in the Grand Republic. And undoubtedly President Wilson relied heavily on tongue surveillance at the German Embassy and the State Department to expose Zimmerman's infamous note. Of course, all this was superstition triumphant, but it is flesh and blood to today's tommyrot about "establishing dialogue" — a contemporary superstition which snags practicaly every politician in the land and threatens the very ecology with rubbish heaps of foolish verbiage every time some sort of social difficulty is revealed.

The nonsense about blistered tongues and sweet apples are just two examples of twaddle which Mr. Emerick has dredged from the past. There were other superstitions equally preposterous and surely as potent and none is without its equivalent in our own enlightened age. For instance, Mr. Emerick notes that many Americans of the last century dutifully believed that one should never "sleep in the moonlight. This may cause you to go crazy." And if one were ever so foolhardy as to cut his hair in the dark, the grim truth was that it "might cause baldness." Everyone from the first Adams to the renowned Harding realized that "a dirty sock worn round the neck on going to bed will cure a sore throat." This one wondrous recommendation does much to explain the circumstances surrounding Eleanor Roosevelt's torturously reliable throat and marital discomfort — a troubling historical puzzle cracked only recently by Mr. Joseph Lash. Certainly a great number of American peasants in the early part of our own century believed that "thunder sours milk and kills the chicks in sittin' eggs," and undoubtedly many New Yorkers believe it to this very day.

Assuredly these are all preposterous, if juicy, notions, but as I say, they have moved me to reflect on our own time, for their modern equivalents differ significantly in that today's superstitions are held by more influential minds. Consider the following from the pen of Mr. Tom Wicker, resident wit of the *New York Times*: " ... there is, in fact, no place to hide from the kind of society we have created, or allowed to develop. *The blacks and the poor didn't make that society; it put them in their present place*" (italics added). Twenty-four carat balderdash indubitably, but for the believing minds it is packed with dynamite, and for many policy makers it is irresistible. You can take it for a certitude that many American politicians, social planners, professors, disc jockeys and elevator operators devoured this passage with approbation and edification, though for the thoughtful few it is as incomprehensible as Chinese cuisine. It is just another of the multitude of high-toned superstitions which influential people merchant these days. Some of the superstitions are admittedly entertaining and provide hours of amusement for civilized men. I should not want to live in this world if we did not have them around to delight us, but others are proving to be a nuisance to a wide variety of innocent persons. Some of these superstitions concern poverty and national defense.

II

Hardly a man runs for high office these days without earnestly assuring the populace that he will elminate poverty. The problem is that before eliminating what we in America call poverty we shall have to eliminate politicians who use poverty as political catnip, and, in the absence of a more enlightened legal code, this will continue to be criminal.

American poverty is the lack, at least in the cities, of enough income to prevent one from *feeling* poor. Social scientists as different as Edward Banfield and Victor Fuchs agree with this definition. In our cities even the poorest people can, through welfare, provide themselves with life's essential needs. Through government programs they can provide themselves with adequate health care and sufficiently nutritious diets. Through transfer payments they can even avoid persistent inconvenience and discomfort. That they do not is not because the income is not available; it is because of an excrutiating intractable syndrome, designated by Oscar Lewis as the culture of poverty and designated by Banfield as the lower class.

At the end of the last decade, social policy allotted some forty billion dollars in transfer payments. Yet only twenty-four billion dollars ever reached those living under the poverty line drawn by the Social Security Administration ($3,335 for a "non-garm" family of four in 1967) and, though it raised their income forty-two per cent, only one half the families below the poverty line ever received any transfer payments. About twelve billion dollars of income separated the poor from the poverty line, but the inefficiency of government is so costly that it would take about thirty billion dollars to close this gap. Imagine, if you will, that the government could raise that money and bring every American's income to the poverty line. Does anyone actually believe that a family of four living on an income of just over three thousand dollars would not feel wretchedly poor in a nation whose median income is over nine thousand dollars?

Fuchs claims that the elimination of

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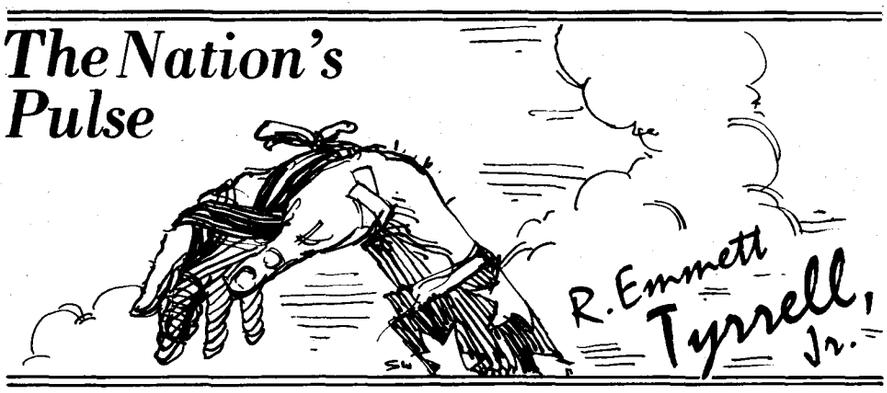
The Nation's Pulse



The Conservatives' Revolt

WASHINGTON — Dinned as we are by the instinctively objurgative, frequently malevolent, journalism of a thinly intellectualized news media, few Americans are given to thinking of that man in the White House as a wise man. Yet, I have no doubt that of all the presidents of this century, Mr. Nixon is one of those most capable of offering the average American wise counsel. He is a man whose basic good sense has been cultured by years of grim experience and animated by a sharp and assiduous intelligence. He is also one of the most cunning presidents of this century, a characteristic that is in itself undersirable only when uninformed by principle.

The problem with a statesman of cunning, then, is not that he is shrewd but that he might be unprincipled or that he might, in his genius, spin off from that mass of slower moving particles that form his constituency. If this happens and no therapeutic action is taken, it is only a matter of time before he spins quite beyond the wider confines of reality and so into the coffin of history.

It is far too harsh and too early to criticize Mr. Nixon for being an unprincipled statesman. One is on surer ground to state that Mr. Nixon has, in his grand policy leaps, left behind many of those loyal and industrious men and women who compose his natural constituency. History may indeed judge these policies to have been informed by his wisdom, but if Mr. Nixon does not soon pause to consult with the conservatives within his party, historians may be making their judgments of him earlier than they had anticipated.

On 29 December Congressman John Ashbrook, an ex-chairman of the American Conservative Union, announced his intention to challenge Mr. Nixon in the New Hampshire primary. In his press conference Mr. Ashbrook seemed to be expressing the opinion that Mr. Nixon has lost touch with America's self-conscious conservative movement and so, danced away from the political realities of America at this point in history. This was not the first time Mr. Ashbrook had expressed these sentiments. In a long, vividly suggestive speech delivered on the floor of Congress on 15 December, he deposited the conservatives' complaint against the administration, averred his remedy, and in the last paragraphs adumbrated the course conservatives might follow if Mr. Nixon were to neglect his warning. We have edited this historic statement and reprint it below that our readers might gain a better understanding of the nature of what might one day be recorded as the conservatives' revolt.

Rep. John M. Ashbrook

IT IS ARGUED by his spokesmen that while President Nixon shares conservative concerns on the issues, he is faced with intractable conditions. He must confront, in the first place, a hostile Congress which wants to go much further in the liberal left direction than does the administration, and the administration's half-measures are intended to prevent even worse things from occurring.

In addition, there is the fact that certain things must be done for political reasons even though President Nixon himself may not like them. There is the further fact that the President has to face up to hostile pressure from the media and from marching mobs, and that some of these things must be done to placate these forces.

The invariable clincher is that any imaginable alternative to what the President is doing would be infinitely worse, so conservatives should back the President even as he is heading to the left.

On examination, each of these extenuations for the President's policies appears to be mistaken. It is not true, for example, that many of the Chief Executive's leftward initiatives are forced on him by a hostile Congress. On several occasions, indeed, as my colleagues are well aware, there have been indications that Congress was quite willing to take a conservative stand on some issue and representatives of the administration have stepped in to prevent such an outcome. The President has often refused to use his own legitimate weapons in contest with liberal initiatives by the Congress.

Equally to the point, Nixon has repeatedly failed to use the considerable leverage of his office in other ways. Assuming a continuing tension between the White House and Congress, the obvious course for a president seeking maximum conservative results would be to make vigorous demands — a total end to OEO, deep slashes in federal spending, a "thick" ABM, and so on. The resulting compromise with the legislature would fall somewhere between the President's views and that of Congress.

The argument that the President must head left for political reasons is even less persuasive. If the things he is doing are what the American people want, and if these are imperative steps for a Presidential politician — why did he not campaign on them?

The excuses offered for this administration's performance leave out yet another factor, perhaps the most important of all—the factor of presidential leadership. While on certain matters such as taxation and rising prices public attitudes seem relatively stable, on others they are responsive to cues provided by the White House. This is particularly true on foreign policy and defense questions where information levels are low, issues complex, and the whole business remote from the man in the street. On issues such as these strong presidential advocacy can shape and alter public opinion.

In the case of Red China, to take the obvious instance, there was little or no pressure of public opinion on this administration to pursue a course of appeasement. To the extent that the American people had any settled notions on the issue, they were decidedly the reverse.

President Nixon's own course of action, however, has perceptibly softened U.S. feeling toward Red China. Thus rather than the President being pushed left by political pressures, the procedure has been exactly the opposite. He has gone left, and created pressures on public opinion to follow him. And, of course, on the defense philosophy professed by the President and outlined in detail by Deputy Defense Secretary Packard, there would be massive consternation among the American people if they clearly understood that their leaders were leaving them exposed to potential attack in order to "reassure" the Soviets.

The net effect of these observations is to deny the assertion of administration spokesmen who attempt to justify the President's policies to conservatives by saying that the President shares conservative principles and is doing the best he can amidst difficulties to put them into practice. The emerging perception is something different: That, whatever the reason for his performance, and whatever the affirmations of his heart of hearts, he clearly does not share conservative convictions — or what I would call traditional Republican convictions — on a day-to-day operational basis. And for every realistic purpose, that unfortunately is the perception which counts. Feelings the President has which do not issue in public policy are regrettably beside the point.

What many conservatives viewed with

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THE ALTERNATIVE February, 1972

The Function of Criticism at the Present Time

Roger Rosenblatt

WHEN I WAS a college senior debating whether to apply to law school or graduate school in English, may prospective father-in-law advised law school, and so I applied to graduate school. The first place that accepted me was Michigan, and when I told my prospective father-in-law he said that's fine, but it isn't the East. Next I was accepted by NYU. He said that's all right, but it's not the Ivy League. When Columbia came through, he told me that it wasn't Harvard, Princeton, or Yale. When I got into Princeton, he said it wasn't Harvard or Yale. When I got into Yale, he said it wasn't Harvard. When I got into Harvard, he said it wasn't law school.

Things trouble me at a later stage than they do most people. I seem to catch on to the fact that a problem exists in a certain area at just about the time its solution is imminent. Luckily, my zeal at these discoveries is so wholehearted that people mistake it for a long-running, passionate commitment which has recently peaked, and therefore congratulate me on my stamina. It took me three years in graduate school to wonder what I was doing there. Between teaching assignments, taking exams, learning three languages, writing a dissertation, taking out the garbage, losing my jump shot, noticing that my wife had given up teaching to raise two children, apparently ours, discovering an inability to stay awake past midnight, acquiring charge accounts, electrical appliances, and a few other things which signaled my future death, I gradually began to consider towards what profession my graduate student friends and I were supposed to be heading. (Most of these friends had actually considered this problem two years earlier, and are now in legal practice, earning a bundle.) One thing was certain; I had no skills. This, in the eventuality of universal draft, seemed an advantage.

As long as I kept to my own constituency, this matter of what I was doing never came to a head. All of us graduate students were in the same boat (no one wanted to make waves), and at parties — there were many, all of them desperate — we behaved like characters in Thomas Mann's short stories, unconsciously decking out our own burial ships (we English teachers can go on like this forever), without even the tacit admission that we were all at sea. The only hope we had to go on was the fact that our mentors, the professors whom we were to become, were alive and seemed content. It was reasonable to conclude that if we behaved ourselves, we too would grow up to be alive and content, yet our elders never said exactly why they were content or what they were doing with their lives. Even had I been brave enough to put the question directly, no purpose would have been served. In university circles, the question, "what are we doing here?" is the signal to break up the party.

Modern times have not really affected this silence because we teachers are too busy reforming the curriculum to explore the existing profession. The good in this is that it preserves one area within the university where there is no danger of fist fights. On the outside, however, it is a different story, as it always is, because no matter how naturally adept or practiced you are in social evasion, there must always come a moment, after the soup, a gap in the lunch time hilarity or in the shared melancholy over world crises, when your (businessman, cop, doctor, architect, pimp, engineer, commercial artist, forest ranger) friend will look straight into your shifty eyes from the steady security of his own, and ask what it is precisely that you do. I usually try to get around this rudeness first by simply naming the courses I teach, skillfully tossing in literary jargon (anagoge, Skeltonics) in hopes that my accuser will not wish to appear ignorant before me and drop the subject. This rarely works, as the presence of a college professor like no other stimulus on earth seems always to encourage confidence in even the shakiest people. I will then try merely stating the classes I teach, again being careful to indicate that I guide graduate students and honors candidates as well as the regular run, implying by so doing that my work is really too advanced for lay comprehension. Failing these two ploys, I tell the truth, always an error. I gulp and simply say that my job is to read books and talk and write about them, to determine and demonstrate what these books mean, where they fit into the history of facts and ideas, and why or why not they are worth reading. After I make this declaration there is an excited pause while my companion searches my expression for a sign that I'm kidding.

I won't say that there isn't some compensation for leading this mystery life, because there is. First of all, it's a great advantage with women, or so I'm told through hearsay by distant acquaintances in foreign universities. Of course, there are those who, when you tell them your work, split your sides and theirs by exclaiming, "Well, I'd better watch my grammar," but for every one of these there are five others who glow all over at the mere mention of literature, and who wriggle furiously at the drop of "poetry." Throw in Modern or Romantic, and watch out. To these women it makes not the slightest difference that they don't know what it is you do. Whatever it is, you've got to be very sensitive to do it. There is no doubt that the academic attachment to poets is the next best thing to being there. I tell women I teach Robert Browning, and immediately they begin talking in sonnets.

With men, however, you can barely strike up a conversation if they know what it is you do. Once you get past the "Well, I'd better watch my grammar" line, a special and eerie quiet comes over the scene, one in which the stranger is occupied in guessing whether you're a fairy, and you in retaliation are trying to strike poses which would indicate that you're not. It never fails that if I am cloistered with a businessman to whom I've just revealed my profession, my next move inevitably is to mention something about sports, especially football. If it would help matters I would probably tell a traveling salesman joke and wear chaps, but it wouldn't. Even by the time I've proven I'm straight I've talked so much sports that I sound like a one-track jock.

Occasionally you meet someone who has either majored in English himself (but who since law school has seen his error and now would take his conversion out on you), or whose child who majored in English is now selling lanyards in Majorca. These people are unusual in that although they do not know what you do, they do not like it and seek a fight. In the long run their hostility is easier to deal with than the bafflement of the general, because

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you can always pit your sense of beauty against their crass materialism. Of course, beauty will beat materialism every time, the equalizing factor being that it envies what it conquers, but for the moment of the struggle you have the advantage of their not understanding the function of literary criticism, your knowledge that this lack of understanding is ubiquitous, and your consequent disregard for a hundred forensic devices with which a seasoned debator would string you up. You therefore conduct the contest on the ethereal plan which is the English teacher's native ground, using the universal ignorance of your function the way a cuttlefish uses his own smoke (a mixed metaphor, though pretty).

In balance, however, the fact that almost no one knows what I do for a living must be considered a handicap. Working in a university one has certain general privileges associated with teaching such as the freedom to meander on Madison Avenue in the middle of the day in the middle of the week, but except for observing obsequious acts of deference performed by publishers' text book representatives who seek your editorship of selected essays by animals, there is no particular external advantage to the teaching of English, and more than a fair share of particular drawbacks. Unlike our colleagues in more flashy disciplines we are not invited to serve in government, primarily I suppose because, excluding JFK, no recent U.S. President seems to have needed English. And except for the unearthing of the Sutton Hoo buriaiship (these things keep coming up) in 1939 and the identification of a new Shakespearean source and a Joyce manuscript a couple years ago, there aren't many news events on which English scholars are asked to comment. I would like to say that our insularity has sharpened our wits, but this essay speaks for itself. The fact is that although we know what evil lurks in the hearts of men, we have clouded men's minds so that they cannot see us (an allusion).

The most painful situation where the employment question develops is with students themselves, a situation more delicate and potentially embarrassing than dealing with one's contemporaries, and one which illustrates the wisdom of teachers avoiding students whenever possible. At Harvard this situation occurs around the middle of the freshman year, when in effort to decide on their areas of concentration, students will seek out faculty members of the various departments and ask them to advertise their trades. It is a small consolation to recognize that ninety-nine per cent of the students are insincere in this quest, wanting either to start working up an elaborate network of self-exonerations (when later, in retrospect, they decide they've chosen the wrong major), or simply to kill time (yours) or, in the case of my colleagues, to meet a famous man. Most Harvard men and women usually know in what they wish to specialize from birth. At the age of eighteen what they want to learn from you is are they going to be happy, to which I always answer yes, one fraud to another.

It's the one sincere per cent, as usual, who cause all the trouble — not the little orphans Annie combing English for relevance (for these I have a prepared speech packed with quotations from Hooker and Sidney which, by the time it has mounted to its boring peroration, has left the kid's heart set on Social Relations) — but the others, the ones who genuinely wish to discover if the study of literature would be a decent way to spend three and a half years of schooling. Once these people are in the program, they pose no problem. Like insects to fire, they become what they sought to investigate. But at the start of things, when these trouble makers *honestly want to* know why English, that's when

Great American Series

"If you don't say anything, you won't be called on to repeate it."

Calvin Coolidge

I begin to wish I were in economics. In those instances, instead of reciting the law, I would much prefer to read the students "To His Coy Mistress," "The Vanity of Human Wishes," the ode "To Autumn," "Lucifer in Starlight," something of Addison and Johnson, of *Paradise Lost*, a Shakespearean soliloquy, a paragraph from Jane Austen, one from Hardy, one from Conrad, passages out of Arnold, Melville, Thoreau, lines from *Troilus and Criseyde*, the Thomas villanelle, short stories of Hawthorne, Twain, O'Connor, etc. etc., deep into the night, only to look up afterwards into the same innocent and ignorant, though maybe by now tearful or flushed, faces I greeted at the opening of the interview. Therefore I do state the law, hoping that somewhere in my recitation they catch the fact that I enjoy my work, and are attracted at least by that.

For these students and their heirs, for my lunch time companion and his, for my father-in-law and his Wall Street cronies, for my own father, an internist who has politely wondered these past years why I too am called doctor, but primarily for Mr. and Mrs. English Graduate Student and all the ships at sea, I have decided to decide publicly what it is I do. I know this is a risk, that at the end I may discover that what I do is nothing, but if only for the sake of the children, I have to face this thing. Naturally, if I should find out that what I do is nothing, I will scrap this piece, not because it is better to thrive in ignorance, but because other English teachers would do me violence. (If at this point you pure and social scientists are beginning to feel comfortable, let me remind you that English, whatever it is, commands the attention and loyalty of more undergraduates in this nation than any other discipline, and if English departments go, colleges go, and so go you, government grants and all.) Indeed, with tens of thousands of students majoring in English, with dozens of university presses publishing hundreds of new critical works each year, with the current Ph. D. market overrun with would-be teachers of English, with a seemingly endless number of quarterly publications made up of literary notes and questions and answers, with many of these same publications and certain societies as well devoted expressedly to the celebrations or anatomy of particular authors, with these and the plain fact that in every high school and college curriculum the single absolute and indispensable requirement for an educated individual is the study of English, we must be doing something, right? Right!

(Don't panic.) I start with a working definition a little narrower than the general designation of literature as written work of enduring importance. For the teacher of English who deals directly or indirectly with people, literature too must deal with people, and it must be good. Literature, then, is the beautiful and orderly expression of human activity in written words. It deals with people, and it does something good. In the highest uses of language it shows our common heroism, cruelty, capacity for gentleness and stupidity, our resilience, friability, magnanimity, selfishness, our blunderings and grace. In short, among the arts it is the most comprehensive expression of our humanity. Accordingly, literary criticism is the instrument by which such expression may be made clear or clearer (clarity not being necessary to beauty or order), made known or more widely known. What beauty may mean I leave to the proving power of the individual critic. The larger point is that literature does something good, and that literary criticism also does something good, though it is not the same good.

The operation of literary criticism is divided into five parts. (It is always a good idea to number one's items in an essay, even if, as in this case, the writer is not certain that he has enough distinctions to fill his quota. Had Poe used numbers in "The Philosophy of Composition" no one ever would have noticed that there are no ideas in the piece, and if it weren't for Empson telling you that there are seven types of ambiguity, you'd swear that each was worth one seventh. I've also always suspected that there are fewer than thirteen ways of looking at a black bird, more than ten commandments, and that there are actually three *Quartets*, but judge for

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yourself.) The number five is a memorable number, and therefore there are five operations in literary criticism. They are as follows: 1) the expansion of literature, 2) the revealing of patterns, 3) the recognition and admiration of excellence, 4) the demonstration of precision, 5) the recognition of the distinction between literature and life.

Of the five the first is the easiest, although it can appear the most remarkable. All that it takes to open up a literary work is study — in the case of *Finnegan's Wake* about ten years which prove not to be worth it, in the case of Joyce's "Clay," about ten hours which make the difference between a dim apprehension of personal sadness and the clear vision of a whole dead world. The expansion of the story, "Clay" depends on a familiarity with the map of Dublin around 1910, some facts about the city laundries, the rules of one Halloween game, and the words and tune of Balfe's song, "I Dreamt that I Dwealt" — nothing more. Add to these one's own sense of the mixture of pitiable and irritating qualities in certain old people, and the story fans out completely. The expansion of literature is detective work at its best. It encourages appreciation of compression and selectivity, for the art of being able to see human activity in terms of little things like symbols and images, but best of all, it urges the mind to assault the seemingly invulnerable, to shake up and poke around until one begins to see things sharply and with a cool intelligence.

The revealing of patterns takes a wider range of study than the expansion operation, but it's a similar process of placing a literary work into one or another perspective, and enjoying it the more for that placement. In *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, the patterns one ought to know are the patterns of the black migration north in the United States, the patterns of black education and of black Christianity, as well as the more universal patterns of sexual guilt and the relationship between fathers and sons. These patterns are historical, cultural, spiritual and psychological in nature, and it takes an understanding of all of them to know what Baldwin is talking about. There are personal patterns worth knowing too, ones which indicate where a work or a line fits into a writer's own scheme of thought, and there are patterns of convention, form, theme and myth — to get into Robert Grave's Ulysses, look at Homer's, Dante's, Shakespeare's, Daniel's and Tennyson's. Sometimes the most important part about revealing patterns is to discover the discrepancies, the places where a man changes his mind and the pattern in which he functions changes shape. In that is a version of the whole struggle between human invention and restriction, not always a pleasant business to watch, but our own.

I come to the recognition and admiration of excellence, an elitist notion if there ever was one, and one bound to exasperate those who prize the Scott and Helen Nearing crowings from the wilderness over *Walden*. No exertion of energy is likely to dissuade such readers because, like the *New York Times*, they confuse contemporaneousness with life (unlike *Life* which confuses contemporaneousness with the *New York Times*), but the effort is still a central operation of literary criticism. This is not to suggest that a critic ought to stop using the word "perhaps" and to cease apologizing for his own existence because these are our tools of the trade, but after or under all the gestures of self-depreciation the cold truth is that the product of an enormous amount of reading, of a thousand comparisons of the ways in which feelings and ideas are expressed, is taste, and to mean something taste must be passed on, even if it may be regarded as an imposition. If it is so regarded, the trick is to make the student prove that it is an imposition, and should he do so effectively, the worse for you, but the better for criticism. The achievement of a sense of discrimination is more painful in literature than in one's social life because it takes time, but in the long run it saves time, which cannot be said of any social decision.

The demonstration of precision in literature could justifiably be incorporated under the recognition of excellence, but to do so would obscure its independent value, to say nothing of reducing the number five. If you remember, I am talking about the function of criticism at the present time, and there is no time like the heavy, drag, and out o' sight present to demonstrate precision of language. (This, by the way, is not a swipe at slang, as every age has its slang, language managing to flourish with or in spite of it. What scares me about our own age is the apparently willful desire for inarticulation, which can only be an off-shoot of the desire to avoid discriminations in a larger striving, I suppose, for the equality of man in deaf muteness.) In Eliot's "Sweeney Erect," Sweeney wipes "suds" around his face as he prepares to shave. Why suds instead of shaving cream? Because shaving cream would break the rhythm of the line, and it adds nothing to it. Why suds instead of cream? Because with cream the action may be misunderstood. Why suds instead of soap? Because soap suggests cleanliness and conveys a less vivid picture. Why suds instead of foam? Because Sweeney is a comic character as well as

"(Summit conferences are) not diplomacy or negotiation at all. They are propaganda tournaments in which the protagonists are aiming not at those with whom they talk, but at their rivals' public opinion. This is well understood by the totalitarians, but only partly by democratic politicians, and not at all by the democratic public."

Charles de Gaulle

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lecherous. Why suds? Because Sweeney is comic and lecherous and grotesque and potent, and because the sound is right. The difference, said Twain, between the word and the right word is the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.

The fifth operation, the recognition of the distinction between literature and life, applies to a potential pitfall of all the arts, but particularly to literature because literature is the most explicit. Because it is the most explicit, even those people who appreciate the meaning of a literary work, recognize its patterns, its general excellence and manipulation of language, can and do make the mistake of comparing literary activity, especially the activity of fictional characters, to their own. The practical purpose in pointing this out as a mistake is the deflation of their self-esteem, as no one ever compares himself to a mean or low character — all those fathers moaning about serpents' teeth — but the greater usefulness in the recognition of the distinction between literature and life is that it provides a reminder of one's own wonderful and terrible human sloppiness. Literature is the beautiful and orderly expression of human activity in written words, but most of the time real human activity is neither beautiful nor orderly, and to see this is not merely to see that one's children are more grateful than Lear's, but, in a wider view, to see the importance of endurance as a virtue, and to appreciate that in real life it is our dogged perseverance along which carries our familial tragedies and comedies beyond the final act. Literature orders life, and life goes on. To recognize this is to think the more of both.

It is inevitable, and I know that all of you who are still awake have already perceived this, that the five kinds of operations described above easily become forms of advocacy. I said before that literary criticism does something good. To disclose the secrets of a work of literature is to see something clearly for its various components; to know its patterns is to see something steady and whole; to recognize its worth is to make informed evaluations; to appreciate its precision is to appreciate the act of saying what one means; to understand that what you're reading is not what you're living precludes your corruption of either. Done right, literary criticism teaches these things, and the learning of them in turn reminds some people at least that such revelations and processes are not inborn, but must be continually coaxed from us, restated and rehearsed, lest we once again convince ourselves of our latent divinity. The function of criticism at the present time — are you ready? — is the advocacy of common sense. If that isn't doing something good, I'll go to law school.

Nietzsche hated academics, and being one himself he had a right to. I confess enormous pleasure in being able to cite Nietzsche, not because he was so deep a thinker, but because of his great name. There are few pleasures in criticism equal to the dropping of exotic names. Poe (king of an exotic name itself) advised writers for *Blackwood* magazine to toss in a line of Greek whenever possible for sheer effect, and admittedly there is a certain shimmer about any page of prose that frames such a line, even if the translation turns out to be "I see the blue duck," but nowadays that particular pretense is exposed, not thanks to Poe, but to the hoards of pretenders themselves who overdid a good thing. Names, however, still have an immense impressive power, so immense in fact that one day a man's entire intellectual or artistic value may be determined solely by the spelling of his name, a phenomenon already being born in the celebrations of Levi-Strauss and Sontag. These two are fine names and should be cited very often, though not as often as Kafka, Goethe, Hegel, Schlegel, Jung or Nietzsche. I also like Proust, Camus, Sartre and Gorki, but not as much as the Germans, the very letters of whose names send readers hurtling against doors. Critics should be very grateful that essays didn't begin and end with Johnson and Burke. One well-placed Kierkegaard is woth a hundred Johnsons, comparative intelligence notwithstanding.

Nietzsche hated academics for their lack of "nobility," for the fact that they do not "dominate," are not "authoritative," for their "industriousness" and "patient acceptance of place." Except where these characteristics would mean that a person would not fight for his rights of free citizenship or those of someone else, I would judge such attributes to be both admirable in themselves and worth instilling in others. In a world of ever increasing sentimentality it is essential to know how to probe, unravel, and evaluate all sorts of grand constructs, and in so doing to be able to recognize one's proper relationship to them. This is the basic sanity of literary criticism. Literary critics may all be made as hatters, but the work itself is okay; it makes sense.

Now here would be a fine point to launch into a professional hymn of priase, and God knows we deserve one, but this was not my intention, and such a hymn would probably be premature by a few months anyway. The purpose of this essay was to report that a literary critic and teacher does something. That done, I leave to others the task of determining that among the various walks of life ours is the most enlightened, the most humane, the most scrupulous and intelligent, and the most essential to national security. For the moment it is enough to note that in the history of human communications there have been relatively few men and women who have heightened our language and the account of our thoughts and actions to a degree where we would look upon ourselves with as much fear and wonder as we would look upon the gods. Then there are some others whose commonplace job it is to remind us that we are only human, a condition complicated and tough enough in itself without seeking higher office, and at times quite splendid, almost satisfactory. These others are saints. One does not ask a saint what he does for a living. □

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Report From The University of Chicago

Fish Story

Joseph A. Morris

Then down came the schools of the fish:
The schools of the fish swam down in filets.

— Song of the Sardine, 5:13
(New Piscine Bible)

MANKIND SPEWS on, spilling his effluent into the air and the water, thirsting after new realms to dispoil. Prophets of the doom proclaim the liturgy, now familiar, of "The Present Trends." They propound the catechism of "The Moon." They gather themselves into their steel and glass cathedrals, lift their hosts — *slide-rules*, they call them — and their crystal test tube chalices, and they chant the creed: "If the present trends continue, oh Lord, mankind will dirty himself out of existence." They recite the formula of the mystery of faith: "The nation that can send a man to the moon can solve all the present ills ...*Nihil obstat.*"

Is it the act of an iconoclast to suggest that the *nation* has little to do with it? Somehow, one feels, pending legislation notwithstanding, present trends will not continue. One innocently muses, a heretic; mankind is not the master of this ship. A greater power has set the course that frustrates human ambition both to rule the world and to destroy it. Nature soothes, and heals, and works manifold unseen wonders; and maybe, behind our backs, laughs a little at our follies.

Somewhere near Chicago lies a windswept pool called Lake Michigan. Reports have come to us, and they linger, that this water is no mere pond,

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but a mighty sea that stretches far beyond the Loop, and at least past Jackson Park. In the days long ago, when travellers came to the University of Chicago, they brought with them tales of shoreline miles out of sight, and of unseen streams and inlets. Readers may scoff at my mention of these fables, long rejected by the smug belief that Lake Michigan is but a puddle fit for garbage. Chicago has struggled for years, for time out of mind, to fill the Lake with trash and poison. Today, readers may feel that it has successfully accomplished its task.

But they are wrong. I have seen the magic of the Lake myself, and I have travelled along distant coasts far from the company, and the wastes, of men. I bear the news that the Lake lives, and life within it continues, and though the waters pass through the valley of the shadow of industry, and receive vast transfusions of filth, even at the very walls of the belching pouring giants, life is sustained.

With April comes the warming of the waters in the Lake. Beginning in the southern reaches along the Indiana coast, then spreading northward by Chicago and along the opposite Michigan shore the shallows come alive with fish urging to spawn. Coho salmon feed along the shores, finding the shad, the alewife, a tasty meal. Lampreys have moved into the fresh water lakes from the sea through the Saint Lawrence Seaway. Men pursue the salmon, but he is a competitive fish, and not easy prey. The times are rare when he can be coaxed into casting range of shore. He tests the ingenuity of men, he demands they come to meet him in boats. Shad and lampreys are not human food; they are spared for the coho.

Early in April, propelled by lust, the smelt head for the southern shallows. They seek warmth for spawning, so they swim for inlets and harbors along the lake. Often cradled in the midsts of steel mills and petroleum refineries, the eggs are set and fertilized. Warm industrial effluent, far from repelling the fish, beckons to them, and they come. A month later, spawning nearly done, and the warmth filtering to deeper and more northerly waters, the smelt depart.

Fishermen have lined the public and corporate wharves, spreading their nets into the water, pulling them up only minutes later ladened with twenty, forty, or sixty fish. They can be seen in Chicago's Calumet Park, or at Harbor Park in East Chicago, or at Clark Street in Gary. The nets are strung from the docks at South Chicago Works, at Inland Stel, and in the U.S. Steel Gary turning basin. From ten in the evening until two in the morning the shores are dotted with the gas lamps of the fishermen.

Poor men bring their families. They build fires and catch their dinners. Ten fish will fill you up,they say. Sporting men bring their wives and friends. After each catch they set up a little assembly line, cleaning the fish, washing them, and stacking them in plastic bags for eating in the summer ahead. A man remarks that he owns two deep freezers, and in three weeks of fishing he has nearly filled them. A group of Mexicans pull in a massive catch, chatting gaily in Spanish, singing of what they call in that tongue, "the sardines."

Smelt are not pilchards, though, which are not found in Lake Michigan. But many other fish are. As May descends upon the lake, the old men who fish for the joy of it bring their rods along with their nets. As the flow of smelt drops from a flood to a crowd to a trickle, the men with the lines begin drawing perch. Sometimes they hook carp, sometimes the salmon. Lake perch and coho are drawn from spring to fall, frequenting the shallows in the early morning, moving to the depths as the sun pours warmth into the water. The ancient struggle between an individual man and a single agent of nature goes on, undaunted by folly or social policy. "Garbage, the mills, the smoke — they scare the men, all right," says an old timer. "But they can't intimidate a fish." □

The Emerging Trucial Omanese Supersheikdoms

William Kristol

THE EASTERN part of Arabia known geographically as Trucial Oman has an area of about 30,000 square miles and a population of about 135,000. Many people — even those in responsible positions — seem to be fairly ignorant of Trucial Oman, or, if they do know of it, chuckle when it is mentioned. In fact, decision-makers and world leaders, to say nothing of policy analysts, ignore this area at their peril. For Trucial Oman is going to become in the next thirty years even more important than it was when it last peaked (around 700 B.C.), when the Omanese played "a predominant part in ancient navigation." Trucial Oman is about to regain its former glory — and then some.

Trucial Oman consists of seven technically independent but closely linked states, all ruled by sheiks. It is a prosperous area; its Gross National Product grea at a rate of 37.3 per cent per year this past decade, raising the Gross National Product per capita to slightly under $2,000 (source: World Bank). Extrapolating the growth rate of the past decade, we find that *the GNP per capita of Trucial Oman in the year 2000 should be about $20 million.* Trucial Oman's *total* GNP (with a population less than one tenth of one per cent as big as that of the U.S.) will be comparable to ours — about $2.6 trillion. This will be an economic phenonemon of some interest, if it comes about. The question therefore is, will Trucial Oman's present rate of economic growth continue for the next three decades? And if so, what will be the effects of the emergence of Trucial Oman as a super-sheikdom (or a federation of super-sheikdom), both for Trucial Oman and the world?

There seems to be little on the horizon to cause a slowing of Trucial Oman's growth rate; in fact, Trucial Oman may well grow even faster in the future. For example, Trucial Oman's present growth rate has been accomplished in an atmosphere of political instability. There have been all kinds of conflicts among the various sheiks, and there has been conflict between the richer and the poorer sheikdoms (especially between rich Abu Dhabi and the others). But the recent establishment of a Supreme Council of the Federation of the Arab Emirates should bring greater cohesiveness and political stability to Trucial Oman. And the conflict between Abu Dhabi and the other sheikdoms is lessening as the other sheikdoms do become much richer, and as a true federation resulting in the virtual unification of the seven sheikdoms becomes more imminent, the prospects are that wealth will be shared more evenly.

Internally — within each sheikdom — the political and social stability is remarkable; nothing has changed in a thousand years. The governments, by virtue of tradition, have almost unquestioned legitimacy; since the leadership is also enlightened, the problem of *ancien regime morale* is avoided. A form of government which has existed for ages but which can produce men like H.H. Shaikh Zaid ibn Sultan al-Nihyan, the Sheik of Abu Dhabi and head of the federation of the seven sheikdoms, is truly the best of all political worlds.

Furthermore, Trucial Oman's incredible growth has provided it with the means of ensuring further growth, especially given enlightened political leadership. For example, Sheik Zaid announced in 1968 a Five Year Development Plan, including "a modern road network, three airports, modern port facilities, telephone networks, a water distribution system, sewage systems, schools, public buildings and low-cost housing units," and various industrial projects. The strengthening of Trucial Oman's already firm infrastructure cannot but help prospects for continued — even increased — growth.

In addition, tourism should help Trucial Oman's economy. There is virtually none now, but with all these modern amenities being built, and given the fact all the other chic places are becoming overcrowded, the rich may decide to "winter" in Trucial Oman, which has a curiously fresh

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and simple beauty in winter, when the air is bright and clear and rain has turned the desert green."

The vision (spectre?) of tourism adding still more impetus to Trucial Oman's spectacular economic growth brings to mind the possibility of currency problems. But these should be non-existent. The famous Trucial rial is one of the most stable currencies in the world. In the recent monetary crisis, when all other currencies were moving up and down and causing trouble, the rial held firm. There was virtually no trading in the rial, so confident were its holders.

One problem may "advanced" societies have suffered from in the past few years is educated incapacity." Will Trucial Oman be afflicted with this disease, thus cutting its growth rate? The answer is no, because Trucial Oman has the one sure defense against educated incapacity: almost no one is educated. In fact, almost no one can read (fewer than five per cent). Studies underway at Hudson Institute indicate that there is probably less educated incapacity in Trucial Oman than anywhere else in the world (although Malawi is a close second); this is certainly a good sign for the country's future.

Are they any significant "countervailing forces" at work which may slow Trucial Oman's growth? I think not. The standard argument would be that the people of Trucial Oman will become fat and lazy and degenerate like us. In the West the collapse of the Protestant Ethic, of the work ethic, has been and is a serious matter. But Trucial Oman never had a Protestant Ethic in the first place. And it doesn't matter anyway, because by the year 2000, no one in Trucial Oman will have to work. The 95 per cent of the people who are now farmers, fishermen, herdsmen are on the whole unproductive; when the country becomes rich, it will be easy to import everything needed for the 135,000 people. All the economic growth is being generated and will continue to be generated by foreigners, aided perhaps by a few educated natives. Since the sheiks have 50-50 profit-sharing deals, all they and their people have to do is sit back and watch. This is the true genius of Trucial Oman; by the year 2000, they will have a $20 million per capita income, *and no one will work*. Trucial Oman will have crossed a new threshold in world history. It will be the first post-post-industrial state.

Only two developments could impede Trucial Oman on its way to Supersheikdomness. One would be an influx of immigrants, attracted by the wealth; this would lower per capita income. The only way to forestall this is not to let anyone immigrate. If this is done, and if some of the educated Omanese emigrate to the West (Trucial Oman is lacking in some minor amenities, like books) per capita income would go even higher. So, probably, would the quality of life — there would be no "Abu Dhabi Review of Books" to get on people's nerves.

The only real problem the emerging Trucial Omanese Supersheikdoms will face in the coming years is defense. The famed Trucial Oman Scouts (numbering about 1,000) are gallant and tough fighters, but seem unlikely to be able to deter or defeat a determined invasion by a major power who wants to take over Trucial Oman and its wealth.

Does this mean that Trucial Oman will be forced to become a nuclear power? Not necessarily. Trucial Oman may well be the first post-nuclear power. It is now in the process of developing a weapon more effective — and more fearsome — than the nuclear bomb: an intercontinental guided oil slick. All Sheik Zaid has to do is push a button and whatever country is causing trouble becomes subsumed in oil. This is just as effective as nuclear weapons — and there is no fallout.

So, will the 21st century become known as the Trucial Omanese century? Who can really tell? All we can say is that present indications point that way. But, as the world becomes more and more "modern," it would somehow be appropriate that the premier part of the world (at least economically) be governed on the principle of the divine right of sheiks. Maybe someone up there's trying to tell us something. □

Some 'Youth Meetings' the Media Ignores

Baron Von Kannon

DID YOU READ the newspaper stories about the big Chicago meeting of The Emergency Conference for Young (an unacknowledged code word for left liberal) Voters last month? Or the pro-abortion rally the Women's Abortion Action Committee staged in Washington in November? Or the People's Party Convention in Dallas in December (it drew 200 of the people)? Or what about the *New York Times* tale of the 400 (that's right, 400) "veterans of the New Left (who) voted to form a new group called The New American Movement" in Davenport, Iowa? If you look at the newspapers but once a week you could hardly have missed their reports. Despite the fact that attendance at all four events fell far short of the announced goal, the media was there with cameras whirring, flash-bulbs popping and reporters scribbling trying their best to prove that the youth movement is still alive and still left-liberal.

But did you read or hear about the three nation-wide conferences held this fall to study democracy and the open society? I doubt it. *The Alternative* sponsored these conferences and, as with everything else done by moderate students, conservative students and responsible liberal students, we managed to maintain an amazingly low profile with the media. Participants at these gatherings, held in Bloomington, Indiana; Cambridge, Massachusetts and Carmel, California, unfortunately do not fit into the "youth" stereotype that the media likes to portray. They were neither screaming leftist, threatening to liberate the solar system or Wallacite yokels.

Participants at *The Alternative* conferences were serious students interested in the concepts of the American democratic system and the open society. That is to say they are what the media considers irrelevant and booring.

Both the speakers and participants at the three conferences represented a cross-section of the American ideological spectrum — representing such diversified groups as Young Americans for Freedom and the Young People's Socialist Alliance. But, unlike typical "youth culture" meetings, *The Alternative* conferences did not collapse into ideological bickering and tests of purity. Instead, all participants emphasized the common element in their philosophies — an underlying belief in the validity of the traditions and principles of the American democratic system.

The highlight of the midwestern conference was M. Stanton Evans who is editor of the Indianapolis *News* contributing editor to *Human Events*, chairman of the American Conservative Union, and, according to *National Review's* masthead, an "exalted editor" of that journal. Evans warned of the dangers and challenges the radical left poses to the democratic system.

Another feature attraction in Bloomington was George F. Will, special assistant to Senator Gordon Allott and Washington columnist for *The Alternative*, who occasionally finds himself at odds with hard-line conservatives. Will spoke on the relation of foreign policy to the open society and the importance of a sound foreign policy to democracy.

Professor Martin Diamond, a member of the government department at Northern Illinois University, contributor to *The Public Interest*, co-author of *The Democratic Republic* and former organizer and campaigner for the Socialist Party, also spoke at Bloomington, delivering such a piquant lecture that he was invited to speak at the following east and west coast conferences.

In his talk, entitled "The Perspective of the Framers, A Decent Regime Although Democratic" he provided valuable historical and political in-

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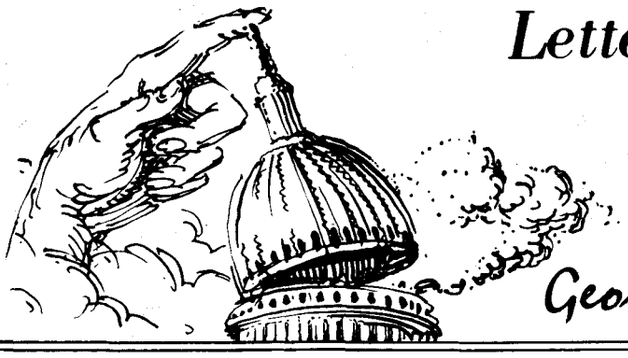

Letter from a Whig

George F. Will

Lots of Whimpering and One, Dull Bang

WASHINGTON — The first session of the Ninety-Second Congress ended with a lot of whimpering and one firm, dull bang. The cacophony was the sound of the good guys doing well.

The principal whimperers were the Democrats who were thwarted in their attempt to steal twenty million tax dollars to finance their campaign next year. The instrument of this theft was to have been the "check off" system, whereby a citizen could earmark a dollar of his tax bill for the political party of his choice. This was attached to the tax bill which the President says he needs for the implementation of Phase II. The Democrats thought they had the President between a rock and a hard place; he could swallow the "check off" and thereby strengthen his political enemies, or he could veto the tax bill, and thereby cripple his economic program.

In the end, of course, Nixon got his tax bill and the Democrats did not get the "check off" system. Or, more exactly, the Democrats' bird in the hand suddenly became an elusive bird in a bush. This happened when the House-Senate Conference Committee met to iron out the differences between the two versions of the tax bill. The result was to keep the "check off" system, but to make it inoperative this year. Thus it will not rescue the Democrats in 1972, and there will be time to challenge the three or four major constitutional enormities of the plan.

Another conspicuous whimperer was Senator Bayh. The Senator wanted to delay the confirmation of Supreme Court nominee William H. Rehnquist. He was trampled under the flying hooves of a Senate lusting after adjournment. Now there are four Nixon nominees on the Supreme Court and disgruntled conservatives are invited to imagine what the Court would look like with four Humphrey nominees.

The bang at the end of the session was heard as a kind of distant echo in the Congress. The concussion occurred in the Azores, where President Nixon announced that the dollar would be devalued.

As I write it is not clear what this means, economically. Devaluation only makes sense relative to other currencies. Thus devaluation of the dollar began nearly twenty months ago when Canada allowed its dollar to float. The German mark has been floating up since well before the 15 August cataclysm. The Japanese yen has been floating up since then.

Devaluation is going to make imports more expensive. Thus it will offer a kind of protection to American industries which make products that were being undersold by imports. It will be slightly inflationary; this will lower the standard of living slightly. But while doing so it will protect some existing jobs and stimulate jobs in exporting industries.

And that is the point. The Nixon Administration, as every Administration since Hoover, has acknowledged a demonstrable political fact: when it comes to losing votes, unemployment is more dangerous than inflation.

As of this writing it is not clear whether there will be another end-of-session development, or whether it will be a popgun pop or the sharp, clear report of a highpowered rifle. This potential development is the Ashbrook Insurgency.

Congressman Ashbrook of Ohio may challenge the President in several Republican primaries. The two most likely are New Hampshire and Florida. The White House is said to be of two minds about this issue.

On the one hand, Presidential aides think that any opposition to the President tarnishes Himself's image. On the other hand, they like the idea of dividing the anti-Nixon Republican vote. They do not know how much of that vote there now is, nor how much can be generated, but they would prefer to have it divided between two splinter candidates. They believe (correctly, in my judgment) that many conservative anti-Nixon Republicans would cast a protest vote for McCloskey.

If Ashbrook decides to run, his first task will be to make clear the exact nature of his mission. This will not be easy to do because his supporters will be of two kinds.

The most ardent supporters will be those whose aim is to ensure the defeat of the President. These persons believe that there is an identifiable and vibrant "conservative movement"; that the fate of this movement is inextricably entwined with that of the Republican Party; that the worst possible tragedy is a Republican President who is not pure as the driven snow; conservatively speaking; that Nixon must be defeated.

The more moderate supporters will be those who believe that Nixon is susceptible to pressure; that the pressure has all been from the left; that a show of conservative strength in the primaries can move the President to a more resolute defense policy, and a less resolute war against the free market; that Nixon is the best possible alternative, but that Ashbrook should be the instrument of pressure.

If Ashbrook — or some other challenger — can make clear that he stands with the moderates, it might be interesting. If he can not, or does not, it will be a debacle and very damaging to conservatism. □

In The Land Of The White Rats

Beyond Freedom and Dignity

by B.F. Skinner
Alfred Knopf Inc., $6.95

"PHILOSOPHERS," Karl Marx wrote, "have made the world. It is necessary now to change it." The necessity for change was precipitated, one supposes, by some inevitable holocaust directly attributable to the philosophically-created universe. Such are the postulates and premises that form the substratum of B.F. Skinner's most recent Utopian tract; indeed, he seems to have absorbed all extant notions of the apocalypse and its causes, for he too argues the existence of a tragic flaw in history. But, for Skinner, the flaw is man.

The American nation has accustomed itself by now to hearing the litanies of doom and destruction in every corner of the park and from every soap-box available, and so we should not be surprised at a Harvard professor orchestrating his own threnody for civilization. And yet, there is a quality to Skinner's book, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, entirely separate and distinct from the freneticisms, the shrillness, and the shriekings of the other works of contemporary Apocalypse. This Utopia seems to be written with a scholarly detachment not common to visionaries. It seems to be written with the dispassionate view of a serious thinker.

In fact, Skinner is a serious thinker. For though he cloaks some of his arguments in the popular rationales of the

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day — nuclear war, population, inequity of wealth, the entire retinue of evil — one suspects that those slogans are thrown in more for maximum effectiveness and appeal than for primary argumentation. Unlike Charles Reich or Jean-Francois Revel, the psychologist Skinner concludes not that his is the only solution because of the narrowing of options, but that his is the only correct and empirically consistent system. Hence, his thesis is presented with only the trappings, and little of the substance, of the apocalyptic literature now in vogue.

Very simply, Skinner argues that the dilemmas of modern man are created by the misconception that man is an autonomous creature who makes decisions. In place of that primitive notion, Skinner argues the case of the controlled man, alleging that we are already controlled by our environment, though we do not recognize that, and that the myth of the autonomous man can only lead to greater difficulties and more patchwork solutions. The particular problem with discussing this work is not the radically different thesis, but the beauty of its internal logic. Skinner's hypothesis is terrifying, for it is the vision of Man the dessicated automaton. Yet it is compelling because, in an era of gelatinous emotionalism, the volume is a work of immense lucidity and brilliant internal consistency.

And, since the internal logic is so rigorous, only two approaches are really left to the critic: the philosophic disputation, arguing against the premises, and the pragmatic disputation, arguing against the conclusions. The important aspect to be remembered here is that, rather than revealing a psychological system, Skinner is constructing a philosophy of society while utilizing the logic of psychology. Hence, a philosophical critique is most convincing.

Firstly, Skinner's premise is material — so material as to exceed the great materialism of physicists. There exists nothing that is not observable, no mind, no spirit, no manner whatever of an "in-dwelling agent." Man is a creature composed of atoms that are animated into forms of observable behavior. These behaviors are induced through necessity (eating) or through social arrangements that arise from those necessities (nourishment is more easily obtained through a large group than by individuals, and hence a society and a code of behavior also exist). All behavior arises, not from a mind nor a spirit nor any other observable agent, but from a need for survival and a desire for a degree of comfortability. Hence, freedom is nothing more than avoidance from those things painful or displeasing, and dignity is nothing more than a reinforcement of "good" behavior. Man, in short, becomes a creature devoid of the dignity we have associated with him, and a creature without any real purpose for living, except that he is already alive. The human animal becomes merely the most intelligent of organisms. And in Goethe's words, then, "Man calls it reason and uses it to be more beastly than any beast." Thus are we relegated to damnation.

But Skinner is not so easily rebutted as that: for perhaps we are nothing more than supreme animals. Even granted that, however, one would think that a better reason can be given for survival than "Let it be." If nothing else, life should be interesting. Yet Skinner leaves us without interest or even happiness, for while we shall be presumably contented, happiness could not be known in this world: even as Milton argued about good and evil, we know happiness by means of sadness. Since sadness would be impossible in this world, so would happiness. Whatever satisfaction would be left, would be, in Camus' words, "the pleasure of a stone." Alone, survival is to be cherished, and alone, survival is man's precious asset. No other value must conflict with this desire and that leads to the only moral precept in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity:* Thou shalt not kill, or, alternately, Thou shalt exist. Killing is in Skinner's world an absolute sin, and so he divests man of the dignity that demands that he fight and sacrifice for something nobler than existence. But to insist that existence is finer than, say, freedom or nobility, or any quality for which men will die, is to discover the logic of the padded cell.

A number of curious strains merge into the philosophy here: logical positivism, with its attempt to render language isomorphic (at which task Skinner himself lends a hand) and its absolute rejection of anything metaphysical; pragmatism and its acceptance of "operative truth;" Marxism, and the "state's withering away;" empiricism, and the need for all facts to be observably corroborated. The last is perhaps the most important aspect, for no where is the need for empiricism explained, nor Skinner's compulsion in its pursuit delineated. Science supposedly demands empiricism, and supposedly denies poetry; but what is the theory of the atom, a minute planetary system that forms all things that are and ever will be, but poetry? Santayana runs through the rigors of skepticism with his own compelling logic, and dismisses external knowledge as illusory. Empiricism is evidentally not the cure-all of history, yet here it does explain some of Skinner's conclusions: the empirical mind can see only materialism and hence can assert only materialism as real. Yet that doctrine has as many problems philosophically as dualism (the system of mind and body in the same entity, and against which Skinner is reacting), and it seems the more dangerous and less correct for its obsessive singularity.

Another strain arises, though, to place Skinner in full perspective. The syllogism of Skinner's universe argues: I. All men naturally desire survival and comfort in their existence. II. The fallacious belief that man is autonomous has lead us to the destruction of civilization and almost of man. Ergo, III. Autonomous man must be conceptually replaced with controlled man, living in an environment created by social scientists. In a stream of thought parallel to this, Plato argued in the *Republic:* I. All men naturally desire wisdom, and thus society's great duty is to pursue wisdom. II. Philosophers are the best and only qualified people to lead society in pursuit of wisdom. Ergo, III. The philosopher-kings shall rule so that perfect wisdom may be found. Change the premise of the *Republic* from metaphysical concerns to psychology, and one immediately discovers Skinner. The total pursuit of an ideal, the regimentation of society to that ideal, and the determination of what men are to do are inherent in both. (Plato, of course, has a recognition of man's complexity that Skinner does not: otherwise wisdom could not be his goal.) And eventually, in our secular world, the psychologist-king replaces the philosopher-king. The criticisms leveled against Plato's authoritarianism and possible totalitarianism apply, in triplicate to Skinner.

Beyond Freedom and Dignity will provoke its share of debate: which is all well and good, for it will force us (I think) to remember again what man is. Amid the other questions to be asked, (Quidem ipsos custodes custodet?), the most damning query is, why must man be reduced to the level of a single disposition or attribute? Alongside Marx, with his socio-economic variables, and Freud, with his sexual levels, Skinner has employed that simplest and most often erroneous of all techniques, reductionism, and applies it to man. As Pasternak wrote, "Man is born to live, and not to prepare to die." In Skinner's world, what are the alternatives?

In that world, in that desolate plain of the future, the only residuum of man would be existence — existence without essence, without meaning, some form of resonant hollowness perhaps, but still hollowness. What compulsion is there to exist, sheerly to endure, if our only purpose is to be a longevity contest? And such a contest must surely be a seeking after immortality. To that quest, Santayana had a devastating reply, "The fact of having been born is a bad augury for immortality."

Fred Corbin

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The Politics of Authenticity:

Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society

by Marshall Berman
Atheneum, $8.95

THIS IS yet another book intended to seduce the modern intellectual into believing that there must be something radically wrong with modern society. Through this book, Berman strives to heal what he considers to be the major illness of modern society. He offers as a panacea the "politics of authenticity." By this, he means a society which will acknowledge the right of every individual to be himself, or do his own thing, or do it like it is. This projected society he candidly admits is a "dream." The search for authenticity, he further maintains, is "bound up with a radical rejection of things as they are." Authority, custom, established institutions, government, tradition, all of which are essential to maintenance of civilization, must be abolished for they have prevented us from being ourselves; they have rendered us inauthentic.

It is the traditional conservatism of thinkers like Edmund Burke which Berman finds most abhorrent. Burke saw that the revolutionary impulse would strip man of the "decent drapery of life," those traditional moral values and habits which restrain his desires. The overthrow of habits and moral authority would not bring about a new man of higher moral impulses, but a new kind of barbarian.

Berman argues that Burke's "decent drapery" only perverts and suppresses the individual, preventing him from enjoying the total freedom to which he is entitled. The System has suppressed self and now action is demanded. The New Left, he fondly hopes, will "bring radicalism back to its romantic roots"—to the ideal of authenticity. To accomplish this, what is necessary, although Berman does not detail exactly what he means by a revolution (does he merely mean a revolution in man's self-concept of what he is or does he want an actual political overthrow of the state?), is a revolution which will cleanse society of the institutions which have fettered him to inauthentic ways and allowed man to rise to his romantic ideal.

Although much space is spent in a discussion of Montesquieu' *Persian Letters* and Rousseau's *Emile*. Berman's book is not intended as a literary critique; it is a political polemic. What the author seeks in these eighteenth century works is a philosophical foundation for modern radical thought. For a man anxious for the promised utopia of tomorrow, Berman paradoxically is concerned about extracting from the history of political thought a tradition which will serve as a foundation for his present political assertions. There is much, he argues, in the *Letters* and *Emile* which will bear fruitfully on an understanding of our current maladies.

Now, to clap Montesquieu into a radical libertarian tradition will not settle well with many readers. For Montesquieu is remembered for his reverence of the law as the basis for civilized society. Political liberty does not consist, he tells us, in doing what we wish. "In a State, that is to say, in a Society where there are laws," he writes in *The Spirit of Laws*, "liberty can consist only in being able to do what one ought to wish, and in not being constrained in any way to do what one ought not to wish." Liberty consists in doing what the laws permit.

The Persian Letters, Montesquieu's first book, was as Berman notes the first political novel written in the West. It is an engaging study of the psychological relationship that exists between master and slave. The sultan Uskek keeps a seraglio about to revolt against his autocratic rule. His number one wife, Zachi, writes him a series of letters explaining with profound insight why the traditional relationship between the wives and the master is a perverted one. The suppression and isolation implicit in such an arrangement forces the women to be something other than what they naturally would be. They must be docile, forever passionate in their love-making, and slavishly obedient. Lacking the very rudiments of personal freedom, they are miserable. The sultan himself in this arrangement is also inauthentic and miserable because he is unable to express true love. True love is only felt and expressed when the partners respect each other's authenticity — the right to be oneself.

Rousseau's *Emile* contains similar insights. Two authentic people fall in love, but are prevented by the inauthentic society from establishing an eduring relationship. Thus, compelled by duties, obligations and responsibilities, they must sacrifice their true impulses. Unable to be themselves, they become miserable shells of human beings. Rousseau in his other work carries this argument to become an all-embracing critique of traditional society. Man is presently miserable, because he is born in chains, Rousseau argues, hampered and restrained by the traditional inauthentic society. What is needed is for a new kind of society to come about where the authentic man might find true expression.

That Berman calls for the maximization of freedom makes him little different from the vast bulk of political thinkers. Even totalitarian political thought claims to be enlarging a "peoples' freedom" or "freedom of the race." What must interest us here is in what kind of order will Berman's freedom exist. Berman argues persuasively for the right of a man to be himself, or as G.K. Chesterton wrote, the right of everyone "to be his potty little self." We are sympathetic with this argument. But Berman goes further. He calls for a revolution of some sort that would wipe away all existing social structures. In the new society which would exist after, Berman is ambiguous as to what would constitute the new man. In an egalitarian, unpropertied, communal society, Berman tells us that man would be creative, imaginative and psychologically well-fitted. What controls, we must ask however, would be placed on this new man to prevent him from irrational or socially harmful behavior? On this point, Berman is silent. Perhaps he does not consider it important, or rejects the notion that in a free society man is capable of wrong-doing. At this point, we hit one of the essential dividing points between the traditional conservative and radical libertarian points of view.

"Liberty," writes Mallet du Pan, "is one thing forever unintelligible to Frenchmen." Liberty has meant for the French equality — that is, everyone would have the same social station, the same advantages and the same privileges. "The love, and even the very idea, of genuine liberty," writes Burke, "is extremely rare." Liberty, in Burke's political thought, is an act of subordination to that which he venerates, e.g., the law, one's country, his God. "Society," states Burke, "cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without." Rousseau worries not about the control of will, but assumes that an expansive will to brotherhood will form as the traditional controls disappear. This is exactly what the traditional conservative would deny. Remove the social and moral restraints upon the individual and you will discover not the Rational Man, but more likely those hopelessly morally destitute characters that Charles Dickens describes in the novel *Tale of Two Cities*, Madame Defarge, The Vengeance, and Jacques Three. Without a sense of morality, of stable social relationships, and of the customs and habits which define our human interactions, man would be thrown on the meager resources of private judgment,having run recklessly through the bank and capital that is the wisdom of our ancestors. We would destroy

"THE LORD KNOWS *I have been among / Conservatives who feel plain stung. / The Navy's almost an antique. / The Army has begun to creak. / With Chiang about to disappear / And welfare marching from the rear, / I held my thumb beside my nose / When faced with Presidential prose. / But now with William Rehnquist in,/ I'm managing a tiny grin.*"

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society by pitting man against man in the Hobbesian sense of "war of all against all." Nothing would remain to restrain a man from expressing himself to the point of annihilating his fellow man.

Certainly one of the arguments of this book is that the social and political trend of history has been a movement away from a primitive freedom toward a more restrictive, oppressive, subsequently inauthentic society. The individual is felt to be more constricted in his freedom than ever before. This is blatant mis-reading of history. One must have the fertile imagination of Rousseau to believe that the primitive savage in his forest was more free than the modern man. He was consigned by nature to perform the functions of a hunter or farmer. His art life was extremely limited and usually designed for the creation of things of an essentailly practical nature, such as weapons or eating utensils. No matter how great his talent might be, he did not have the opportunity to become an executive, a jet pilot, a teacher or a poet. He had no choice in his life's occupation but to follow in his ancestors' footsteps. The women were even more oppressed, consigned to the duties of mating, bearing children and cleaning and cooking. There was no possibility of her exchanging roles with the man. Woman's liberation would have been incomprehensible in a society so restricted by nature to ageless patterns of life. Life was short and brutish, there was no time to think of liberation. Certainly, modern civilization offers more than this. The multiplicity of things to do, or not to do permits us all to express ourselves in more ways than ever imaginable to the simple savage.

The roots of self are dying, cries Berman still. Only drastic social reform can save us. It should be clear by now," he writes, that the approach to modern society I have found in Montesquieu and Rousseau prefigures Marxism in many deep ways." What Montesquieu and Rousseau lack is proper revolutionary impulses, Berman adds. Real reform is possible only if an intellectual and spiritual vanguard, who possess a higher form of consciousness,' can manipulate the oppressed but confused masses into action." No, this isn't a quotation from Hitler or Lenin but from the pages of this book. In the middle of all this prattle about equality, Berman introduces us to the most brazen elitism possible, revealing to us perhaps his secret desire to be part of that vanguard that would assume leadership of society.

Thus, Berman offers us the new man as the model of authenticity, *l' homme revolte*, "the man who gains his freedom and becomes himself by striving to both liberate himself and his fellowmen from a social system that alienates them all." If we take this seriously, we must believe that according to Berman's thinking the present urban guerilla or Weatherman bomber would be the very model of an authentic man.

In this book, therefore, we have all the ingredients of true radicalism: a call for revolution, an atomistic individualist doctrine, a hankering for the destruction of all presently existing social structures. All these seekers after authenticity are just beginning to learn a fact of life which our first seekers always knew; that whoever you are, or want to be, you may not be interested in politics, but politics is interested in you." With this statement, Berman concludes with the most radical of all doctrines, that politics encompasses the totality of our lives, that nothing private remains.

W. Wesley McDonald

Comrade Mountebank

The Rise and Fall of T.D. Lysenko

by Zhores A. Medvedev
(I.M. Lerner, translater)
Anchor Books, Doubleday, $2.50

WOULD YOU believe that for a quarter century, up to Khrushchev's dismissal in October 1964, the teaching of the principles of genetics was banned in Russia? Scientists who wished to study genetics were harrassed and forced to do their work on the sly. During this period, an ill-educated charlatan, T.D. Lysenko, controlled the biological sciences to such an extent that some of his critics were jailed, others fired from their jobs and none allowed to publich material criticizing Lysenkoism, a fraudulent theory which did immense harm to Russian agriculture.

Lysenkoism, or "Michurinist biology," was a variant of Lamarck's disproven theory that acquired characteristics can be inherited. Genetics teaches that environment influences heredity only through occasional mutations (most of them useless) and through natural selection, the statistically greater success and reproduction of the more fit. Stalin and other Russian leaders preferred to believe that the environment was much more significant than heredity because they wanted to create the "New Soviet Man" rapidly by altering the structure of Russian society. In the 1930s, Lysekno and others of his clique used pseudoscientific "experiments," coupled with political invectives against those who disagreed, to consolidate their hold on Russian agribiology.

Lysenko's theories were easily debunked in the West, but since all the Russian universities, research centers, newspapers, scientific journals and funds for research and teaching were under the control of the state, and since Lysenko had the backing of Stalin and later, Khrushchev, the Lysenkoists were able to hide their experimental failures and silence their opposition. Those who disagreed with Lysenko's neo-Lamarckism were labelled "bourgeois biologists" and "enemies of the people."

Medvedev's book opens with the words of N.I. Vavilov, "We shall go to the pyre, we shall burn, but we shall not renounce our convictions." Vavilov, a distinguished biologist and a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, was arrested for his opposition to Lysenko's dogma and sentenced to ten years in prison; he died there a year later, in 1943. Others similarly imprisoned were Karpechenko, Levitsky, Govorov and Tulaikov. . .all of whom died while in prison.

Shortly after World War II, scientists who had the knowledge and courage to oppose Lysenko tried to discredit his doctrines, but they were unsuccessful in the political maneuverings necessary to weaken Lysenko's grip on Soviet biology. Typical of the period is this *vignette*: In a speech for the 31st anniversary of the Russian revolution (1948), deputy premier Molotov praised, among other things Russian, Lysenko's achievements. Shortly thereafter, the great Russian biologist Rapoport was summoned by a party bureau and told to denounce the genetic theory of inheritance; as Rapoport tried to defend genetics, he was countered with a quotation from comrade Molotov's recent speech. Why do you think that Molotov knows genetics better than I?" he replied. One does not ask impertinent questions; Rapoport was fired from his position, expelled from the Communist party, and forced to work as a laboratory assistant at a geological institute. It was poetic justice that Rapoport was the scientist commissioned by party leaders, right after Khruschev was ousted, to write a detailed denunciation of Lysenkoism which was widely published in the USSR. In fact, one of the reasons for Nikita K.'s dismissal was the state of Russian agriculture (especially the grain shortage of 1963), which in turn was partly caused by the crackpot schemes of Lysenko and his ilk.

Medvedev is the former head of the Department of Molecular Biology at the Institute of Medical Radiology at Obninsk. In 1969 he was incarcerated briefly in a mental institution, a typical cure for Russian dissenters, until the protests of his colleagues led to his release. Part of this book was distributed hand-to-hand during the postwar attempts to discredit Lysenkoism; the writing is a bit choppy, but compensated for by the wealth of details given by the author. Medvedev's point of view seems odd. Either Medvedev is provincially patriotic about Mother Russia or he was careful not to be too

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critical of the socialist state even in these writings which were smuggled out of the country.

He is more outspoken in his criticism of Khrushchev than he is Stalin; this may be because the material dealing with Stalin was written earlier, when the country was even more repressive than it is now, or the downgrading of Khrushchev may reflect the party line. The period of Stalinist terror is blandly referred to throughout as the era of "the personality cult."

Medvedev makes it quite clear that centralized state control of science was primarily responsible for the reign of Lysenkoism, and this may serve as a warning to those who have had few qualms about government-sponsored research in the U.S.

The American government has less power over science than does the Russian government, and America has a greater dedication to academic freedom, but there are American parallels, unfortunately. In the September 1971 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. Harvard Psychology Professor Richard J. Herrnstein published an article on the genetic influences on I.Q., documenting the conclusion that eighty per cent of the differences in I.Q. between people of European ancestry are genetic rather than hereditary, and upholding the general validity of I.Q. tests. Herrnstein observes that the connection between I.Q., performance, success and inheritance might lead, in our meritocracy, to a hereditary elite. Not only have leftists harrassed Dr. Herrnstein in his classes at Harvard, they have called for his firing, picketed *Atlantic Monthly* and demanded that the magazine stop distributing the offending issue. Naturally, if there are significant inherited differences between men, then the existence of poorer and richer classes will be partly due to differences in innate capabilities between men, rather than to exploitation" as defined by Marx. The question of the relative influence of environment versus ancestry is still with us, as are those who fear the verdict of science and act to suppress inquiry. Fortunately, they do not have great political power, yet. Medvedev shows the cost borne by men when truth is sacrificed to ideology. That cost is too high.

Douglas W. Cooper

Douglas Cooper is a Ph. D. candidate at Harvard University, former editor of Counterpoint *magazine, and an associate editor of* The Alternative.

The Life and Times of Horatio Hornblower

by C. Northcote Parkinson
Little, Brown, $6.95

WE COUNT it a treat when we find a new book either about or by one of our favorite characters, so what shall we count it when we find one book combining two of them? That *is* one of the many puzzles about *The Life and Times of Horatio Hornblower*, by C. Northcote Parkinson.

The new volume is of course the first complete biography of Lord Hornblower, whose sailing adventures against Napoleon were so well recounted by the late C.S. Forester. It might also be, though it is not, subtitled, "A Fresh Installment in Parkinson's Exploits."

Mr. Parkinson, or so everyone wrongly understands, made his name famous by one great stroke of brilliance, which we know as Parkinson's Law. The truth is the opposite: it is the name that made the law famous. This is easily proved. Everyone remembers Parkinson; find a pigeon and bet he can't remember the law:

$$X = \frac{100\ (2Km + L)\%}{YN}$$

Yes, that is Parkinson's Law, describing the growth rate of bureaucracies. Mr. Parkinson drew the lesson in layman's slanguage, "this figure will invariably prove to be between 5.17 per cent and 6.56 per cent, irrespective of any variation in the amount of work (if any) to be done."

Now, unquestionably this was a stroke of brilliance. Yet if it had been entitled, say, "Smythe's Rule," it would have been known only to cognoscenti of public administration. But call it "Parkinson's Law" by C. Northcote Parkinson, and the phrase if not the formula will be known everywhere. It is one more testimony to the power of a brilliantly contrived name.

Such names have the advantages, but they can also be a burden. So when Mr. Parkinson set out to write grand history, he was forced to specify that he was not in the least satirical. It's a pity that his history *East and West* is not as widely known as his Law, for it speaks to our day. His thesis is that east and west alternate in ascendancy over world civilization, each pushing back the other only to decay and retreat itself.

Since Marathon and Thermopylae, he writes, the west has stood for a nexus of values centered on individual dignity: certainly the total absence of such values is one of the most striking things to emerge from the recent reports of life in China. Also the single-mindedness and primitive energy portrayed by these same reports add to his observation that the east is rising, that the west has entered its time of decay.

A rather melancholy view of our times is no bar to a lively *joie de vivre*, as Mr. Parkinson shows. And it is with great charm and with that C. Northcote makes his debut as a biographer, though it is certainly not insignificant that for his subject he is drawn back to England's time of greatness.

Naturally, one feared that the Hornblower chronicles would end with Mr. Forester's death. In any event, his twelve volumes had pretty well blocked out Hornblower's rise from an orphan to Admiral and Lord. How happy it is, then, that Mr. Parkinson has discovered two boxes of Hornblower papers unknown to Mr. Forester, and that the current viscount Hornblower has agreed to their release in honor of his illustrious ancestor. This produced the full-length biography, dedicated to Mr. Forester, but an effort the latter "lacking this material would never have dared attempt."

The most fascinating new information is in the extraordinary letter that led to discovery of the papers. It was left by the first Lord Hornblower himself, to be opened on the 100th anniversary of his death and explains what formerly could at most be guessed about the events centering on Captain Sawyer of H.M.S. Renown. We knew, of course, that the captain suffered from what we now know as paranoia, confronting Hornblower and the other lieutenants with an impossible situation.

We knew that Hornblower had convened a meeting of the officers, that the captain had learned of it and searched for them, that he was incapacitated in a fall during the search, and later killed during the action in which Spanish prisoners took the Renown, and Hornblower retook it. And, as Mr. Parkinson notes, "the turning point of Hornblower's career was the recapture of the Renown, or so it seemed to his contemporaries. Or would it be truer to say that his future was made by the death of Captain Sawyer?"

In the 100th anniversary letter, we learn that Hornblower had planned the meeting as a trap for the captain, had personally kicked him down the hatchway, and indeed ordered him put out of misery during the recapture. Sawyer was more than merely a lunatic, he was a danger to the service and a tyrant to his shipmates," Hornblower's letter says in defense. A different sequence of events might have led me to the gallows instead of the House of Lords. That would be true, however, of half the men who enter the peerage. If they had feared to take risks, if they had allowed obstacles to stand in their way, they would not have been fit to rule."

Mr. Parkinson tells us of the existence of yet another box of Hornblower papers he has not yet tracked down, which suggests that other volumes may follow. One hopes so, for there are several mysteries still to be cleared up.

Chief among this is the mysterious absence of the present viscount Hornblower from Burke's Peerage and Landed Gentry," one of the standard lists of British nobility. This is particularly unfortunate, for it gives ammunition to Hornblower's detractors. Librarians the world over, for example, persist in classifying Mr. Forester's

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books as adventure stories rather than biography, as indeed they classify Parkinson's Law as humor rather than a study in administration.

Well, it's always nice to find the persnickety librarians proved wrong again. And no doubt there is an easy explanation for Burke's skipping the present viscount, probably a contemporary scandal related to his removal to South Africa. In view of the historical importance of the new biography, these points ought to be cleared up. Otherwise, too many readers, under the influence of those librarians, are likely to think Hornblower a figment of the Forester-Parkinson imagination.

For that matter, even the most knowledgeable reader will find it hard to fight off the impression some sort of spoof is being carried off here. Perhaps it is only living in an age when journalists write scoops *ex nihilo*. For certainly, there are too many well authenticated reports to doubt we are dealing with a man who has actually lived and walked. But even so, there *is* an unmistakable element of fiction in the character of C. Northcote Parkinson.

Robert Bartley

Robert Bartley is a journalist from Washington, D.C.

Beer and Beethoven

Dig It, Man

The Language and Music of the Wolves, anonymous, Columbia; C30769.

FOR SEVERAL years now I have suffered with increasing revulsion the evolving "pop sound" as it is called. Notwithstanding the claims of Leonard Bernstein and like-minded aficionadoes, the Beatles' art has never impressed me as being much above that of — say — Mr. Glen Miller or Mr. Conway Twitty. It is pleasant stuff but only momentarily. After a palmy celebrity beginning in avant campus salons of the new Kultur and amongst the aging American dopes who feast off the fads of that Kultur, it reigns for a while in the mossy hearts of sorority girls, finally graduating with them and slipping ignominiously into the repertoire of the A&P Symphony Orchestra. Hence, today suitably arranged versions of the pop sounds' earliest masterpieces are performed in daily concerts for thousands of nonchalant grocery store goers in search of the perfect melon, choicest lump of beef and cheapest nylons. It is history's horselaugh on the doltish neomaniacs who whooped it up everytime the Beatles released a foot stomper. But I do not despise all modern music. Thanks to Columbia Records, I have become a roaring enthusiast of acid rock or serious contemporary music, as it is called. This was not always the case.

At first acid rock, unlike early pop, did not even amuse me. From the claims made for it by the self-styled critics of pop music I concluded it was probably pretentious and embarrasing. I considered its sales popularity merely another monument to the gullibility of the middle-class automaton who has convinced himself that his production line scrounginess is an heroic affirmation of self. But even in the ages of darkest barbarism a modest flowering of artistic merit appears — and so I listened to a record of acid rock, and how glad I am.

The Columbia Record Company has brought forth from the welter of pop a timeless achievement, "The Language and Music of the Wolves." It has turned my mind, impelling me to revise my earlier low estimate of serious rock. This historic performance is not the work of a mediocre college boy. Nor is it the expression of a mental defective. It is the masterful outpouring of an anonymous group of authentic geniuses, prowling about for new modes of artistic expression. The cultural nabobs were right, this is very high art. When people such as Leonard Bernstein and William Sloan Coffin began stomping and clapping, I should have realized that there was something quite extraordinary occurring. I expect "The Language and Music of the Wolves" is only part of the good news.

It consists of eleven bands of arias by several artists of whose sex I am unsure. All eleven performances are without instrumental accompaniment, and I take it, this is "back to the roots" — a genre recently made popular by Mr. Bob Dylan.

The opening band features a long, high-pitched kind of howl (my intent is not to cast aspersion, but as such a recent convert to pop music I do not yet know all the rich terminology). It is the finest solo I have heard in some time, bringing to mind the late Miss Janis Joplin at her best. Admittedly this is a much more advanced form than Miss Joplin's work, yet there are traces of that old inimitable primitivism. Whoever this artist is — male or female — his is a bestial magnetism.

The finest performances rendered on this disc, however, are bands two, three and nine. Band two, entitled "First Growls of Wolf Pups Inside the Den," begins with a lilting concatenation of pantings, evocative of all the youthful idealism and earnestness which have come to prefigure the young of what we call Consciousness III. Ending with an innocent sniff and tragic screech, this, I take it, is a song with a message.

Band four, cryptically entitled "Barking," combines the tempo and raucous expressiveness of the various social movements struggling for the soul of modern America. The tempo is driving, the lyrics not readily intelligible, the violence and frustration just beneath the surface. This is a chorus for our time, and I dig.

Band nine, "Distant and Close-Up Howling Ending in Group Howl," is a melodic bridge between the existential penury of the urban soul, and the great sense of fulfillment to be found in Encounter Group Experience. It is something to think about.

The whole of side two is taken up by a piece entitled "The Wolf You Never Knew," narrated by Robert Redford. Here Mr. Redford discusses the life of an average wolf in America's vanishing wilderness. Frankly, I do not understand it.

This, then, is a very advanced stage of musical expression. And anyone who, like me, doubted the important things taking place on the pop scene should listen to it very carefully. Let us remember how the critics sneered at Mozart, and how they drove poor Schumann mad. The young people who put together this triumphant recording have had access to the finest education ever available. Their work is bound to be superior and defiant of facile comprehension. But these people are aware of what is going on in this sorely afflicted nation of ours. Though I doubted for years that the Beatles and the virtuoses of acid rock would ever chisel out any achievement whatsoever, I am now man enough to confess how wrong I was. Their heritage is this towering work, "The Language and Music of the Wolves," and its performers deserve everything they get.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

-CORRESPONDENCE-

To the editor:

I could not agree more with Mr. Tyrrell's January editorial. However I wish to remind him that there have been "educated men of intellect" in politics before. The case of Edmund Burke comes to mind, especially when I compare his thoughts with some of the idotic legislation of today which deranges our heritage of freedom and enthralls future generations. Burke appreciated the enduring damage of politicians when he wrote:

"Each generation is but one link in a lengthening chain. It is not for us, the creatures of a day, to decide what part of the heritage of the ages we will preserve, what part we will remodel or destroy. We are not the owners, but only the custodians, of humanity's baggage. It would be presumption on our part to discard old customs and institutions because their purpose is not clear to us; no one generation should set itself up as a judge of society's future needs; the ties which knit together a state or a people have a mystical sanctity, and the rationalist who strikes right and left in a fanatical desire for progress may end by destroying the vital but intangible forces which preserve a civilization."

Stan Delacey
Oxford, Mississippi

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EDITORIAL I
continued from page 3

poverty as experienced in America merely means bringing every family to an income of half the mean. I cannot believe that this would eliminate one's sense of being poor, for the inflation would be considerable and social planners just have not been very good in predicting men's feelings. If we are going to attempt to eliminate the feeling of being poor it seems more realistic to go full boat and raise incomes to the erstwhile median income. But now the futility of our undertaking becomes obvious, for there simply are not enough funds available in America the Bountiful to raise all incomes to the national median, or even to Fuchs' figure (consider that corporate profits in 1970 amounted to only fifty billion dollars). The cost of bureaucracy would not allow it. Inflation would not allow it. The nature of American society would not allow it. The people would not allow it. And finally, I suspect the nature of the problem is just not amenable to such a solution. For when we discuss relative deprivation — which is what American poverty amounts to — we are not only talking about income levels. We are talking about aspiration levels, and men's aspirations for the good things of this world forever transcend resources.

In America, when a politician proclaims his intention to eliminate poverty, he inflates the expectations of the citizens, he intensifies the poor's felling of poverty and, as fate would have it, he actually creates American poverty. Considering the kind of poverty legislation urged by such groups as the National Welfare Rights Organization, and by politicians such as Senator Edward (Teddy) Kennedy, it becomes obvious that the superstitions surrounding poverty are more dangerous than superstitions about swollen tongues or dirty socks. Their influence on the citizenry is unfortunate. Their influence on polity could be catastrophic.

III

Probably the most creative activity going on in America today involves political and academic pronunciamentos on national defense and foreign relations. So abundant and varied are the superstitions regarding these subjects that it is only a matter of time before they are incorporated into a nationally recognized religion replete with rituals, scriptures, mullahs and horse hairs.

In domestic matters Americans turn out only a few new superstitions a year, but in foreign affairs their prolificacy has been truly monumental. Every few weeks a new bugaboo is revealed, a new savant steps forward and an old superstition expires from overexposure, while a dozen replacements elbow their way to center stage. This process has been going on since the rise of Kennedy. How long it can continue I do not know; it is all too tremendous to contemplate.

Remember the hopeful early days of Mr. Nixon's Administration when there raised in the land a children's chorus promising that if the Vietnam War would end, some twenty billion dollars would be available to care for more pressing domestic problems — namely, them? Then Mr. Daniel Moynihan explained that this twenty billion dollar windfall would be utterly dissipated by things such as a) military and civilian pay increases, b) cost escalation, c) cost overruns on weapons systems already under development but not yet deployed, d) future expenditure consequences of already approved weapons systems and e) wider research and development.

The children moved on. Another superstition ascended in popularity. Supposedly vast fortunes were accruing for American tycoons as they carried off the fabled treasures of Vietnam. Or, according to a more recent variation, Vietnam abounds in limitless oil deposits.

The *New Republic* and the *Nation* are convinced that Mr. Nixon is actually expanding hostilities in Vietnam. And the way the *New York Review of Books* sees it, Washington is up to no good in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Western Europe, South Asia, Amchitka and Berkeley, California, to name only a few. One senator, a son of the famous Hoosier State, seriously suggests establishing a Department of Peace. Other statesmen believe that the most persuasive tactic for encouraging the inscrutable

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Russians to disarm is to beat them to it. All these notions are of course untrue and irrational. They are genuine superstitions. The last two are vividly illustrative of the deficiencies afflicting the nitwits who hold these views. We already have a Department of Peace. It is caled the Department of Defense, and if the pawky senator is implying that the Department of Defense truly intends to promote war, well then a cursory look at recent history reveals that it has been about as successful at bringing war to America as another large Federal agency has been at providing health, education and welfare. Finally, the doleful truth is that limiting arms has very little to do with limiting war. If men are going to fight, the scarcity of modern conveniences is not going to dissuade them. Nations already know how to blow up the world. No one is going to forget. And the best way to persuade nations not to use their horrid offensive weaponry is to develop invulnerable defensive weaponry. That is to say, rather than cut back defensive outlays for research and development, we should probably increase them. We should continue to argue against war. We should continue to urge moral principle in international relations. But we should never yield to our dreams before assuring that they become realities.

The problem with those who flatter themselves with the peace prefix is that they rarely think matters through. They are just not that serious about he business of government. The blessed McCarthy has been engagingly poetic in his foreign policy statements but all good poetry is palpably untrue. If it were true it would not be beautiful. Were McCarthy ever to stumble into a position where he had to face the consequences of his brassy chatter, he would become a soaring hawk overnight.

Consider old Tom Jefferson dreaming away down in Monticello. Whenever he picked up his quill he journeyed through time to consort with poets, philosophers, and even an archangel or two. But as soon as he stepped into the White House he swore off the thing, began dictating his thoughts and gave manifest destiny its most vigorous shove

So it has been with the sainted Kennedy, the second Johnson and now Mr. Nixon. No one wants to wake up to a commissar, though he might break fortune cookies with a War Lord. Those who hold the view that America had best dismantle its military because it already possesses enough weaponry to puff this globe into dust are victims of a dangerous delusion. I have never been able to take them seriously, though I have always dreamed of taking them on in a game of poker.

IV

It is manifest then that in this great nation —the hope of all Christendom and the home of Leonard Bernstein — there still flourish as many superstitions as ever. And many of these superstitions have sent fumes dangerously close to national policy. Further, the Republic is chopping through high seas, and from all quarters there are grave fears for America's future. But imagine that politicians were to demur from magnifying our sense of relative depravation. Imagine that Mr. Nixon's sensible doctrine of a low profile abroad should continue while a sound defensive superiority is maintained. Finally, imagine that we stop hoping for a magic act from every agency of the federal government and start yawning at the moral exhibitionism of our demagogues while elevating personal standards.

What would be the state of our national distemper if, say, Senator McGovern moved on to newer, less cosmic, superstitions? It is difficult to predict the status of America's crisis if the frantic superstitions of the left liberals should fade before the triumph of a new, more enlightened, set of spurious beliefs. But assuredly autumn will soon be upon them, and then the civlized few will have a new batch of palmists to enjoy.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Editorial II

The Results of 'Evenhandness'

IN KEEPING with the Administration's "evenhanded" Middle Eastern policy, President Nixon and Secretary of State William Rogers offered to Israeli Premier Golda Meir, during her recent visit to Washington, "assurances" that the United States is committed to Israel's security; they did not, however, offer to Mrs. Meir "assurances" that Israel soon will be permitted to purchase the Phantom jets and other military equipment which it has been asking to buy for months.

By characterizing its Middle Eastern policy as "evenhanded," the Nixon Administration may give some Americans the inaccurate and misleading impression that the Middle Eastern policies of preceding administrations were not "evenhanded," that they were, in fact, biased in favor of Israel and against the Arab states.

Since 1948, when Israel won its independence from British colonial rule, proclaimed its statehood, and defended itself against Arab armies intent on its destruction, the United States has given some economic and military aid to Israel and it has had friendly relations with Israel. But, since 1948, the United States also has given generous amounts of economic and military aid to the Arab states and it has strived to achieve friendly relations with these states, even when some of them have been hostile to our country and even when friendly relations were achieved at Israel's expense. For example, after the 1956 Middle Eastern war, the United States joined with the Soviet Union in compelling Israel to withdraw its army from the Sinai Peninsula and accept a fragile set of security arrangements, arrangements which Egypt would wreck in May 1967.

Whether the United States should have given so much economic and military aid to the Arab states and worked so hard to achieve friendly relations with them is questionable, but what is unquestionable is that the United States has not had Middle Eastern policies which can be characterized simply as "anti-Arab" and "pro-Israel." Neither has it had policies which can be characterized simply as "pro-Arab" and "anti-Israel." Such policies would have entailed support for the destruction of Israel and the annihilation of its people. Many Arabs have taken America's opposition to these heinous goals to be a sign of an "anti-Arab" bias; most American have taken it to be a sign of a bias in favor of decency and good sense.

Besides giving some people an inaccurate and misleading impression of the policies of preceding administrations, the Nixon Administration has based its own "evenhanded" policy on a misconception and a false assumption.

The Administration seems to use "evenhandedness" as a synonym for "fairness," and it is possible to infer from the Administration's actions, including official statements, that the Administration conceives of "fairness" as "similar or even identical treatment for all parties in the same situation." This conception of "fairness" is peculiar and even wrong because it means the party that is trying to be "fair" acts without taking into account or making judgments on the different attitudes toward it of the parties in the situation and the different circumstances, resources, actions and ends of these parties. A "fair" judge does not sentence a convicted criminal *and* his victim to jail. A "fair" teacher does not give A's to students who always attend class and turn in superior work *and* to students who rarely attend class and turn in inferior work. A philanthropist who wants to be "fair" does not give assistance to anyone who asks for it, whether he needs it or not. The leaders of a nation at war would not consider it "fair" — indeed they would consider it "mad" — to give their battle plans to their allies *and* their enemies. To be fair does not mean to lack discrimination or to systematically avoid judgment; to be fair means to treat the parties in a situation consistently in accordance with certain rules or standards. Fairness is not equivalent to justice, but without fairness, there can be no justice.

While the misconception underlying the Nixon Administration's Middle Eastern policy is that "evenhandedness" or "fairness" means "similar or even identical treatment for all parties in the same situation," the false assumption of this policy is that *similar treatment* of the parties in the Middle Eastern situation, particularly Egypt and Israel, will promote a "just and lasting peace" because Egypt and

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Israel have *similar ends*. But their ends are not similar; in fact, they are incompatible. At the very least, Egypt wants Israel to withdraw unconditionally to the armistice lines that prevailed in May 1967 and at most, it wants to destroy Israel (these two *Egyptian* ends are not, as Israel well knows, incompatible; they can be achieved *seriatim*). On the other hand, Israel wants to survive and, consequently, it refuses to withdraw unconditionally to the old armistice lines, lines from which Israel easily was attacked and could again be attacked by Arab armies and guerrilla bands.

The incompatibility of the Egyptian and Israeli ends often is obscured by the euphemistic and vague language of President Anwar Sadat and other Egyptian leaders. It is true that, at times, especially when they address crowds of citizens or soldiers, Egyptian leaders clearly state their ends. They describe the excitement and glory of the "coming battle" and, invoking Allah, they characterize the defeat of Israel as not only a military and political goal but also a spiritual imperative. Yet these leaders realize that such candid and colorful language, however much it may raise morale at home, offends many people abroad. So when they meet with leaders and newsmen from other countries, these Egyptian leaders talk about "peace," a "political settlement" and so on. (This language apparently affects some State Department officials as booze affects alcoholics: they cannot get enought of it. It intoxicates them.)

If the current cease-fire is to be maintained, and if a long-term, overall settlement eventually is to be achieved, it wil not be because Egypt suddenly changes its attitude toward Israel, but rather because Egypt is convinced that it cannot win a war against Israel *and* that it cannot gain through diplomacy what it has failed to gain through military means. It will be the reluctant recognition of these facts which will lead Egypt — *anything* will lead Egypt — to abandon its plans for the destruction of Israel and to work for a settlement which both sides can live with. But Egypt cannot recognize, reluctantly or in any other way, facts which are not facts.

By refusing to sell Israel the arms it wants, the United States is allowing Israel's military position to deteriorate while the Soviet Union continues to supply Egypt with the most advanced military equipment and, where necessary, technicians and soldiers to operate the equipment. Whether Israel is now militarily inferior to Egypt is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine, but America's failure to sell arms to Israel, and the concomitant question of America's commitment to Israel's security, undoubtedly encourage Egypt to believe that, if not now then someday, with the help of Allah (and the Soviet Union), it can defeat Israel.

While America's refusal to sell arms to Israel has weakened Israel's military position and thereby strengthened that of Egypt, America's diplomatic initiatives have undercut Israel's diplomatic activity and encouraged Egypt to believe that it can gain throught diplomatic means what it so far has not beeen able to gain through military means. If the United States would have limited itself to urging the two sides to enter negotiations without preconditions, it might have helped to promote a settlement. But such limited diplomatic activity might not have appeared "evenhanded" since Israel, but not Egypt, always has been willing to enter negotiations without preconditions. In any case, the United States has not limited itself to urging such negotiations; instead it has participated in efforts to work out the details of an interim agreement on reopening the Suez Canal as well as an overall settlement. In the course of doing this, the United States has attempted to meet some of the conditions and demands put forth by Egypt and, by withholding arms and diplomatic support from Israel, to get Israel to do the same. But the United States will not meet or, at least, cannot get Israel to meet all of the Egyptian conditions and demands. Israel resents and resists the pressure America is putting on it and it is disturbed and puzzled by the lack of American understanding and support. Egypt accuses America of duplicity and giving total support to Israel. But in spite of its criticism of the United States, Egypt knows that the United States may help it gain concessions from Israel which it cannot gain on its own, so it is willing — why should it not be willing? — to use the United States for its own purposes. To the extent the United States can get Israel to make concessions without receiving anything in return, the United States removes an incentive for Egypt to negotiate seriously with Israel.

Among the goals of the Nixon Administration's "evenhanded" Middle Eastern policy have been the attainment of a "just and lasting peace" (that is, the millennium) in the area, and the maintenance of friendly relations with Egypt and Israel. The Administration has failed to achieve these goals. A "just and lasting peace" is no nearer to realization in the Middle East today than when President Nixon took office, and by trying to maintain friendly relations with Egypt and Israel, the United States has managed to achieve bad relations with both. It has not induced Egypt to break or even loosen its ties with the Soviet Union and it has not reassured Israel of its commitment to Israel's security. Egypt remains bellicose and intransigent, and Israel is now apprehensive.

But in this entire situation, what is perhaps of greatest significance for America's international interests and responsibilities is the Soviet Union's expansion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, an expansion which has coincided with the Nixon Administration's "evanhanded" policy and an expansion which, insofar as it could have been stopped only by American opposition, may be attributed in part to that policy. The new "evenhanded" policy has replaced the old American policy of firm opposition to Soviet penetration of the the Mediterranean and the Middle East (a policy which helped to maintain Israel's security even though that was not its primary goal). Under the old policy, the Soviet presence in the region was small. Since the Nixon Administration's "evenhanded" Middle Eastern policy went into effect, the Soviet Union has built up a Mediterranean fleet which is equal or superior to our own, supplied Egypt with vast amounts of advanced military equipment and establsihed in Egypt its first major military presence outside its own territory since the occupation of its satellite states in Eastern Europe.

The Soviet Union is attempting to achieve hegemony in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. What stands in the way of Soviet hegemony are the determination and strength of Israel and the United States. Israel's determination is unquestionable, but its strength is limited. The United States still has substantial strength but its determination is very much in doubt. Our country can begin to demonstrate its determination — its determination to resist Soviet expansion in the Middle East and to defend its own interests and those of its allies — by abandoning its futile attempt to meet Egypt's conditions and demands for a settlement, supplying Israel with the arms it needs, and making it clear to the Soviet Union that America will not allow it to dominate the Middle East. This is what it would take to demonstrate American determination, but given the cynicism, disillusionment and weariness which have overcome many people in the course of the public debate over the Vietnam War, given the malicious and mindless criticism by some people of America's role in international affairs, and given the doubt of some people that America can legitimately defend its interests or that America even has any legitimate interests to defend, given all this, is a demonstration of American determination politically possible?

Terry Krieger

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CONFERENCES
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sights into democratic traditions of the American Republic.

Other significant speakers and workshop leaders at the Bloomington conference included Morton Blackwell of the American Enterprise Institute, David Brudnoy, a libertarian professor at Northeastern University and regular contributor to *National Review* and *The Alternative*, Marvin Peebles, an attorney for the Philadelphia Model Cities Program, George A. Taylor, an Ohio State law student and Terry Krieger, a Harvard prize fellow and senior editor of *The Alternative*.

The eastern conference, held in Cambridge, was organized by John Moscow, a contributor to *The Alternative* and Bill Kristol, a senior editor. Whipping up an extravaganza which would do credit to the feats of Barnum, they brought forth a dazzling list of speakers and, after Saturday evening's lectures, held one of the most memorable meetings in the history of the Saturday Evening Club, featuring a string quartet and a reasonably priced bar.

In addition to Professor Diamond the east coast featured Professor Paul Weaver of Harvard's department of government discussing the role and responsibility of the press in a democratic society. Alexander Bickel, a contributing editor for *The New Republic* and a professor from the Yale law school, talked about repression in America, while Professor Robert Nisbet, sociologist at the University of Califonia, and a contributor to *Commentary*, *Encounter*, and the *Intercollegiate Review*, discussed his most recent book, *Degradation of the Academic Dogma*.

Norman Podhoretz, the editor of *Commentary*, led a thoughtful and lively discussion of the moral and political climate among intellectuals and Garrett Scaleria spoke about common sense and the common man.

The western conference was held in Carmel, California and featured three speakers from previous conferences, Professor Diamond, Marvin Peebles and Morton Blackwell.

Eugene Methvin, associate editor of *Reader's Digest*, spoke about the new revolution, not a violent radical revolution, but a revolution entailing a return to democratic principles.

Tibor Machan, who is associated with the objectivist-libertarian journal *Reason* also spoke. Discussion groups dealt with topics concerning both the theories and tactics on implementing the open society and fighting opponents of democracy on campus.

What were the results of the three conferences? Well, none of the students voted to overturn the world, or even to build a new society. But many did walk away with a better understanding of American society's validity, its shortcomings, the way it functions and how it can be improved. This at least was the goal of the conferences.

Agreement was reached by students of widely divergent perspectives to work together to defend democratic process and the tactics of that defense were not neglected.

Most of the people involved, both students and lecturers, were extremely pleased with the conferences, despite the fact that they were not rewarded with film coverage on NBC news.

Norman Podhoretz, for example, writes, "I enjoyed speaking at your conference in Cambridge, and I agree with you about the importance of bringing moderates of the left and moderates of the right together to discuss public affairs. My own belief is that the maintenance of democratic institutions in America depends upon the strength of the forces of the center, and conferences such as this have a contribution to make in helping the center to hold against the symbiotic onslaughts of the radical left and radical right."

Nor were favorable comments limited to conference speakers. Joe Duggan, a student in St. Louis offers another typical remark, this one of the Bloomington conference, "I was greatly impressed by the lecutres and discussion..."

Although no new form of repression was discovered, no bombs thrown and no barricades manned, the three *Alternative* conferences were considerable successes, in that they brought together thoughtful people from all sorts of backgrounds, encouraged these thoughtful people to continue their defense of the beneficient aspects of the American system, and whenever possible — to take the offensive.

It's too bad the media's concern for sideshows distracts them from the legitimate student activities that endure in spite of the diminished fanfare. Yet, perhaps it is all for the best. The cameras inevitably draw the frauds and there was simply no place for the entrepreneuers of revolution at these conferences. All Abbie Hoffman would have attracted would have been spitballs. □

NATION'S PULSE
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alarm under President Johnson they now seem willing to point with pride to under a Republican President. This, I fear, is one of the basic reasons why the public places us in such collective low esteem. I still believe it is in the best American tradition to speak out, even when it is in criticism of your own party's actions. I have not and will not shirk from that role, regardless of the consequences.

What has happened here in the House — and in the other body — has happened on a broader front to the conservative movement. In terms of public debate and articulate leadership, the Nixon administration has nearly decapitated American conservatism. By promoting its own variant of liberal proposals and foreclosing Republican opposition, this administration has gone far to stifle ideological debate.

When a Republican president proposes FAP, or a form of national health insurance, or a softening stance toward Communist China, the fundamental point the liberals want to make is removed from the realm of controversy. Since both Democrats and Republicans are suddenly wedded to liberal assumptions, the phenomenon noted by the *National Observer* emerges: The liberals win the point of principle by default. In a political sense, therefore, this administration has left American conservatives bereft of big-name political leadership. There have been some countervailing efforts here in the House and freshman Sen. James Buckley of New York has made a notable effort to speak out on some of the principle issues on which the White House has veered left, but at this point such efforts can hardly overcome the almost unanimous silence of other conservative leaders.

The excuses for this administration's performance offered by conservative Republican leaders would be bad enough if they were simply a species of mistaken commentary. These excuses and the underlying attitude they represent, however, are an integral part of the problems conservatives face, perhaps even a major part. In large measure the President has been behaving the way he has because conservative leaders have assumed such a passive public attitude toward his leftward initiatives.

The assumption of the congressional and other leaders who tell conservative rank and filers to support the President appears to be that, by staying close to the administration, withholding criticism, and not breaking party ranks, they can maximize their influence and help steer the White House on a conservative course.

While that approach may be useful in getting occasional appointments for political friends, where larger policy questions are concerned it would on the record seem to be almost completely mistaken. With the evidence we have concerning the decision-making process in the White House, such an approach amounts indeed to a virtual suicide pact for conservatives.

The hard line turned to soft line overnight, only to wander back to hard line again when the immediate pressures eased. These are, I think, instructive episodes.

They tell us, for one thing, that the "don't-make-waves" approach of conservative political leaders is precisely wrong. The President's continued assurance that he will have the support of these leaders, no matter what, makes it certain he will move left to absorb the insistent pressures pounding from that quarter. Since almost all of the noted conservative leaders have virtually stated they will not jump ship, even when the President engages in the most overt liberal initiatives, the President may assume he has the conservatives in his pocket. He is free to move as far left as he wishes in order to placate the liberals. The performance of the conservative leaders is thus, in itself, a major contribution to the leftward drift of the administration.

There is also another curious phenomenon here in the Washington landscape: The pervasive defeatism which afflicts the administration and its congressional Republican supporters.

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The Bootblack Stand

Dr. George Washington Plunkitt, our prize-winning political analyst, has just completed a penetrating study of the last Congolese election. Published in August, it focuses on the unique position of minority groups in the Congolese electoral process; it can be purchased in all bookstores. It is titled *Escape! A New Demand Response System*. Now, through this column, the distinguished Dr. Plunkitt has agreed to advise American statesmen in this time of troubles. Address all correspondence to The Bootblack Stand, The Establishment, R.R. 11, Box 360, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, Continental U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Plunkitt:

If George Washington was the father of our country, who was the mother of our country? And isn't it pretty &?*$ing sexist to distinguish between the two?

Right on,
Bella Abzug, M.C.

Dear Abzugorooni (M.C.):

What a groove to receive a letter from you! I never truly believed you existed, for the name sounds so much like that of a now extinct cousin of the speckled rhinoceros of Java. Similarities exist even in your behaviors. At any rate, having established your existence, I still can only make a stab at answering your question, being unsure as I am of what you consider to be "our country." Reviewing your legislative career is like studying the career of a legislator from the Republic of the Congo. But let us assume you are talking about America in a very special way. Well then, the mother of your country is Gore Vidal and it is not at all sexist, conventionally *understood*.

—GWP

Dear Mr. Plunkitt:

Ever since I left the hospital, the New York police have been harassing me every time I step onto the street. What is my legal remedy?

U Thant
Ex-Secretary General of
the U Nited Nations

Dear Mr. U Thant:

I am not sure you have a legal remedy. The wisest bit of counsel I can offer to you is to stop breaking the law. Even New York has stringent laws against panhandlers. Try working for a living. Incidentally, have you ever served in the Congolese Parliament?

—GWP

Spokesmen for the administration repeatedly talk as though the liberal-left were in the ascendant, and say that conservatives can do little more than fight a timid rear-guard action.

There is plenty of evidence to suggest such defeatism is unjustified. There is to begin with the fact that Richard Nixon and George Wallace in 1968, both running on emphatically antiliberal platforms, secured between them no less than 57 per cent of the vote. That outcome was universally and correctly interpreted as a stinging repudiation of the liberal way of doing things in Washington and a mandate for moving the country back to the right. If we had nothing but that statistic to go on, we would have reason to believe that Washington's assumption of inevitable liberal victory is mistaken. But in fact we have much more.

There are many other indices which show liberalism to be a declining political force, but a few examples will have to suffice. We may note, for one thing, the explosive growth of the suburbs and their army of homeowning, taxpaying voters who do not want handouts from government, but who do want restraint on government spending.

We may note as well the complementary fact that members of labor unions are more and more susceptible to conservative appeal on economic as well as "law and order" grounds. Much of the suburban population explosion involves members of unions, and an AFL-CIO survey in the late 1960s disclosed that no less than 50 per cent of the union's members now live in the suburbs, and that as economic status and place of residence have changed so have political attitudes.

Harris and Gallup surveys likewise reveal a steady increase in explicitly conservative sentiment in the country. In the wake of the 1968 election, Harris found his respondents choosing the designation "conservative" to describe themselves by a 2-to-1 margin over the designation "liberal" — 38 to 17 per cent. In the spring of 1970, Gallup found for the first time in 30 years that the self-designated conservatives in his poll results far outdistanced the self-designated liberals. In Gallup's inquiry, the conservatives outstripped the liberals by a margin of 52 to 34.

Such data, taken together, present a major opportunity to the Republican Party and the conservative cause.

The result of effective leadership could well have been a period of conservative and Republican ascendancy to match the Democratic era that followed upon the victory of Franklin Roosevelt. Instead, the net result of this administration may be to frustrate for years to come the emergence of the conservative majority.

To state the problem is to point the way toward at least a partial solution. The key to this situation, above all else, is the attitude of conservatism's political leadership. If the acknowledged conservative spokesmen persist in defending the President's every move, placating the rank and file and defusing conservative opposition, then a further leftward drift by the administration seems assured.

The repeated assertion that conservatives must support the President no matter what, is a method of binding them to the administration as it plunges ever further to the left to placate the ever clamorous left.

There could be an entirely different scenario. What if, in this hypothetical situation, the conservative leaders treated the President's initiatives to the left exactly as they would treat the same initiatives from a Democratic President?

Instead of accepting or actively defending such things as wage and price controls of the President's accommodation with Red China, they stir up a vigorous opposition. They speak out against these policies in Congress and before the media, and raise a storm of criticism in Republican and conservative circles.

It is reasonable to suppose that such continued and active opposition would succeed in mounting effective resistance to one or another such liberal policy and of kicking up a storm of public resistance. Even if such opposition did not succeed in defeating the measure in question, it would certainly make its acceptance difficult and generate problems for the administration.

One such experience — just one — would be sufficient to make the White House conscious of the fact that it could not take conservative political leaders for granted. Which means that its next move to the left would be a lot slower in coming. By behaving in that fashion, that is, exactly contrary to the way they are behaving now — conservative political leaders could begin to salvage the conservative cause. □

A Special Treat for Hoosier Readers of The Alternative...

IN OUR TIME

This exciting television program, hosted by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. and Lawrence D. Pratt features interviews with noted scholars, political leaders and journalists. Guests for the coming weeks include M. Stanton Evans, Prof. Martin Diamond, Tom Huston, Senator Henry M. Jackson and Mayor Richard Lugar.

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"Whom the gods destroy they first make mad." – Euripedes

JULIAN BOND

Sensible assessment of Supreme Court Justice Rehnquist by one of those many good Americans who so fear Vice President Agnew's violent rhetoric:

"I think Rehnquist is the nearest thing to a Nazi we've ever had on the Court."

CRAWDADDY

Progress against bone disease as divulged by Miss Yoko Ono:

"In my case, I am a small woman because people repressed me when I was young. My bones stopped growing because of the repression that surrounded me."

THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY

From the font of simple solutions, a torrent of drivel:

"Being poor is having no cash in hand and damned little on the way. Put in these terms, poverty in the United States is almost a picayune problem. A redistribution of about $15 billion a year (less than two per cent of our Gross National Product that is now pushing toward $1 trillion annually) would bring every poor person above the present poverty line."

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Even in America's time of troubles *The New Republic* **finds a silver lining:**

"Public schools across the country are slipping into bankruptcy. Dayton, Ohio schools have already closed, and Chicago faces closure the month of December. Schools have been shut down temporarily or are near it in Independence and Kansas City, Missouri; in Louisville, Portland and Philadelphia. In Gary, Ind., teachers decided to work for two weeks last month without pay checks. In California, although deficit financing is prohibited by the state constitution, several major school districts are operating in the red this year ...."

The scrub woman of *The New Republic* **learns the perils of thinking out loud when one of that great journal's writers is faced with a deadline and an empty wall:**

"We catch ourselves wondering, sometimes, if readers understand what's going on in Washington. Blessed if we do. But we have the handicap of being right here watching it. It might be easier from a distance."

Romance and revolution abound at this enlightened journal of pure unadulterated radicalism:

"Good-looking, Interesting Woman (35) seeks possibility of indepth relationship with a very attractive bright and lively man; a man who has 'made it' in the Establishment but is not blind to its faults; a man who believes that POETS are still relevant. (New York-New Jersey area) New Republic Box 4970." (classified ad)

An untouched masterpiece carefully disinterred from an editorial labyrinth at *The New Republic:*

"Two-and-a-half million handguns are being manufactured or imported every year, they now account for half of all homicides, and sales have *increased* since the Gun Control Act took effect. (Incidentally, so have the sale of cigarettes and birth control pills — eds.) They are particularly numerous in the South (along with homicides) and Mr. Nixon has thrown in his hat with Dixie and the gun lobby which prefers homicides to registration. It is wrapped up in sex; for many a handgun is a virility symbol."

THE NEW YORK POST

Political philosophy as smoked by the illustrious Dr. Peter Hamill —lover, author, soldier of fortune:

"Americans have become the subjects of elected kings. Every four years they elect a President, but in effect that President serves as king. The government is of his choosing, but often the men who run that government can acquire more direct power over the lives of American citizens than the President himself."

THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS

Dr. Alison Lurie proffers its trendy counsel on how to read a really good book:

"Tender Is the Night **is also extremely** interesting from a women's liberation point of view. Nicole is not permanently cured by marrying Dick, but only when she stops being dependent on him and stands alone."

Yet another good reason why the liberated *New York Review* **is more often quoted by learned minds than even** *McCall's:*

"Now that organized religion is of little social significance, the great corporations through advertising (remember "Togetherness"?) and hiring policies favor the married, while looking with great suspicion on the bachelor who might be a Commie Weirdo Fag or a pro-Crypto dyke. As long as mariage (and Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique)* are central to our capitalism (and to its depressing Soviet counterpart) neither man nor woman can be regarded as free to be human."

The dehumanization of Eleanor:

"After all, Eleanor Roosevelt was a last (the *last?* the only?) flower of that thorny Puritan American conscience which was, when it was good, very, very good, and now it's quite gone and things are horrid."

THE NATION

Sometimes it hurts very much to live in Amerika and be an editorialist for a journal of the New Establishment, as this anguished passage reveals:

"Last week, some self-styled conservatives, about a dozen of them, met to discuss whether or not they should run one of their persuasion against Mr. Nixon in 1972. William F. Buckley, Jr. was of course present, and, according to *The New York Times*, said later on *Firing Line* that the real purpose of the meeting was to remind the President that he has a 'vast and slightly sullen constituency to his right.' It may be difficult for less polarized citizens to imagine what view of the world is taken by people who declare themselves to the right of Mr. Nixon, but James Burnham, one of the ancestral voices of the new conservatism, who works as a columnist for Mr. Buckley's *National Review* and who was also at the meeting, wrote an opposite editorial piece recently for the *Times* that throws some light on that state of mind."

With incomparable style this elegant journal offers its readers yet another quack cure:

"IS THERE A SANTA CLAUS? We don't really know. But one thing we do know is that we have coming another year of Dick-in-the-Box. It's a tricky sort of present. You can't exchange it— at least not until next year — and you have to pay for it as long as it's around. A painful prospect — *The Nation* is at hand to clear the mind and settle the nerves. Your family and friends will appreciate it. And it doesn't cost much!"

PARTISAN REVIEW

Partisan Review, **once the glory of Manhattan's magnificoes, makes a candid plea for feature material:**

"Editors' Note: We'd like to remind our readers that they are invited to send in examples of nonsense. A free subscription to *PR* will be awarded for each contribution used. In case of a tie, single copies will be sent to the latecomers."

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CONTINUING CRISIS
continued from page 2

governor. Before his escape he had been residing in that state's prison for manslaughtering a fellow. Edgar Smith is a relatively free man after fourteen years imprisonment on death row. But Ralph Bunche became extinct as did over 900 sea otters inhabiting outlying areas of scenic Amchitka. However, the worst news appeared in a lugubrious editorial in the *New York Times* wherein it was divulged that 42,000 whales and some 200,000 porpoises and dolpins expired last year. In fact every twelve minutes a whale receives its eternal reward according to the *Times*.

• The Newark Board of Education voted 5 to 0 to accept fellow board member, Mr. Lawrence Hamm's resolution for flying the black nationalist flag in city schools. Mr. Hamm is seventeen years old. In Tzaneen, South Africa, justice was swift for those two men accused by the local witch doctor of being responsible for the lightning that killed two people — they were stoned. Enlightenment and progress prevailed in Zambia where President Kenneth Kaunda banned the opening of any new beer halls. And in Accra, Ghana, Chief Nana Nadi Konkoba explicated the real meaning of family life when heannounced his intention to seek the hand of his twenty-sixth wife. Meanwhile in Denver the Very Rev. Mr. Hosea Williams of the Southern Cristian Leadership Conference reported his grim discovery that the citizens of Red China have "more freedom than a black living in the ghettos of New York City or Denver."

• On 15 December the Johnny Express, a freighter with Panamanian certification and a naturalized American Captain, was seized by Cuban pirates in the Bahamas. The head of the Kerner Commission was finally indicted for perjury as well as tax evasion and embezzlement.

• A traditional Christmas was celebrated in many parts of the Republic. Miss Sandra Glass of Santa Barbara, California showed once again that giving is better than receiving when her apartment was burglarized twice during the week before Christmas. Mr. Earl James Hooker of Sewanick, Arkansas tried to bring a six-week-old puppy home to his children on Christmas Eve, but it apparently fell from the back of his truck, was dragged twenty-three miles, and what he told his wife to bring in from the truck turned out to be something other than a six-week-old puppy. Bernard De Weile of Dunkerque, France became angered when his parents refused to accompany him to midnight mass and burnt their house down. The red ball of cheese given as a Christmas present to the Mayor of Malabon in the Philippines turned out to be a bomb, and there will be a run-off election early next year. Forty-seven bums and a social worker on Chicago's Skid Row died of infected turkey and Karl Le Broom, an ex-SDS member, was arrested at Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Detroit where he stole the baby Jesus from a crib scene and replaced it with himself. But the true spirit of Christmas was displayed in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where an unidentified man handed out $1,400 to pedestrains and was on his way to the bank to withdraw another $2000 when the police arrested him and hurried him off to the hospital for observation. □

Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell believe their thoughtful journal can demythologize social problems. Use this subscription blank to find out.

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